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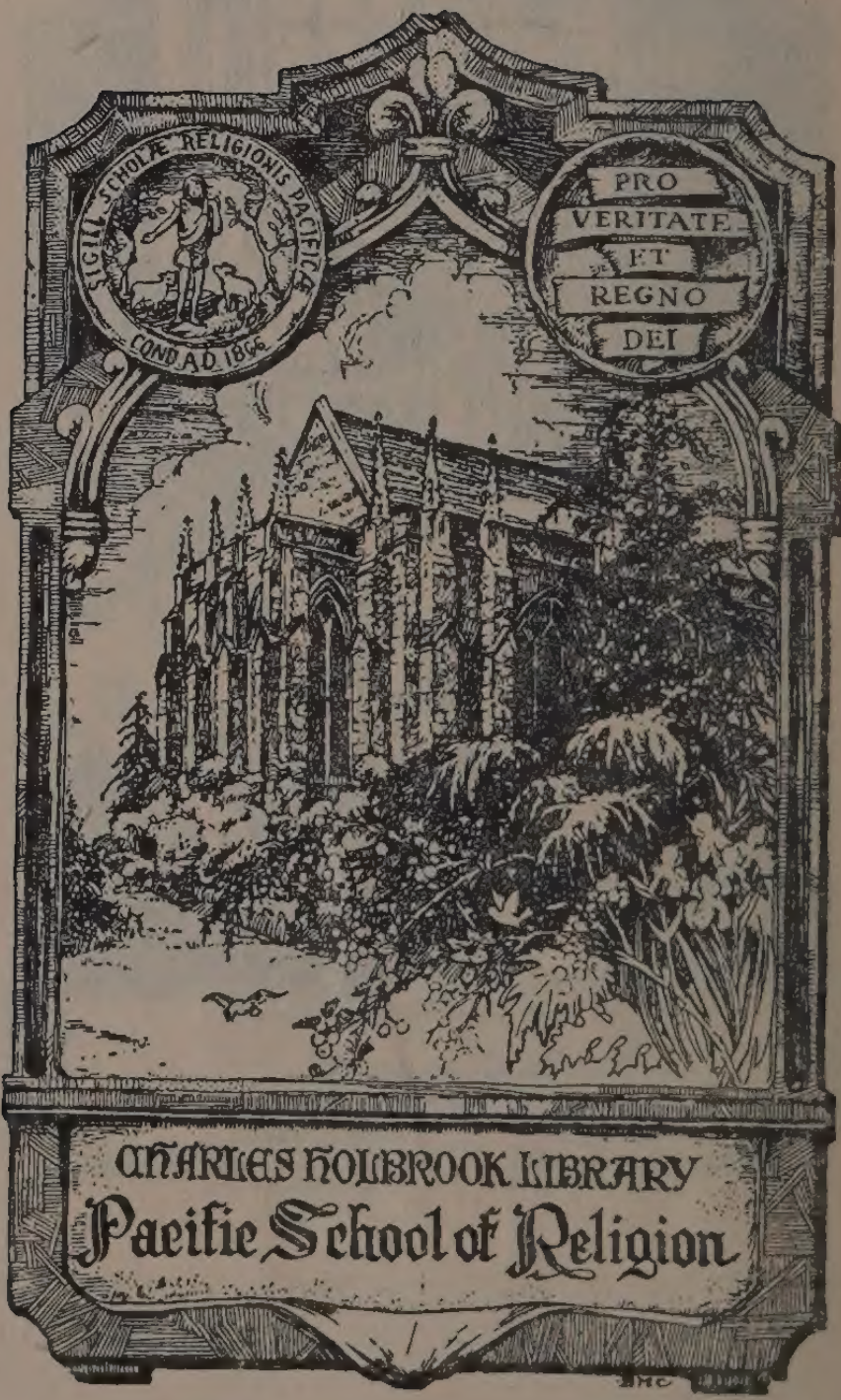
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BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

ELIZABETH FRY.

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NOTE.

This little volume is reprinted from one of the publications of the London Tract Association of Friends, with a few unimportant changes, and the addition of some passages taken from an Obituary in the "Annual Monitor."

BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

ELIZABETH FRY.

On the page of divine inspiration is inscribed the sacred decree, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." This has, doubtless, a special reference to that *witness* which *is in heaven* — that *record upon high* — by which the actions of the just are registered in the "Book of Life:" yet it also indicates that the bright course of those faithful servants of God and benefactors of mankind, who "rest from their labours," and whose "works do follow them," is designed to serve as an ensign throughout succeeding generations; exhibiting, by the force of a holy example, the blessedness and the duty of treading in that pathway of christian dedication, in which they sought to follow Him who "went about doing good," and who "came to seek and to save that which was lost." In reviewing the life and character of Elizabeth Fry, in reflecting on the self-sacrificing benevolence which actuated her spirit, and in tracing the deep current of christian piety from which it sprang, the reader may be animated to seek, like her, to pro-

mote the glory of God, and to spread the knowledge of Him and of His Son Jesus Christ.

This excellent person was the third daughter of John Gurney, of Earlham, in the county of Norfolk. She was born in the year 1781. Her mother died before she had attained her twelfth year. Deprived by this bereavement of the judicious care of a tenderly beloved parent, the youthful group of eleven children were subjected to little restraint. The mind of their indulgent father does not appear to have then yielded to the deep religious convictions that subsequently influenced him. His daughters were allowed to participate in the amusements of fashionable life, and also to associate with persons, who, whilst conspicuous for talent and literary research, were sceptical on the all-important truths of christian doctrine. But, whilst thus exposed to the seductions of vain delights and speculative opinions, a gracious Providence watched over the interesting band; and, through the renewed visitations of the "day-spring from on high," mingled with chastening dispensations of sorrow, it pleased their Heavenly Father to attract them from the paths of worldly pleasure, and gently to lead them in the way of safety and peace.

The first of the sisters who declined the pursuits of gaiety, was the subject of this sketch. She did not renounce them from any blind subservience to the christian views of the Society of Friends, of which she was, by birth, a nominal member. A gradually imbibed, but deeply-seated conviction of the value of time — of the responsibility of occupying it

usefully, and of the powerful influence of example, led her to resist the inclination, so inherent in our fallen nature, to indulge in self-gratification and worldly ease. She was, during her earlier years, remarkable for much originality of thought and quickness of comprehension; was timid, yet very decided in judgment and will; and, even whilst a child, evinced a disposition to promote the well-being, and to soothe the cares and sorrows, of those around her.

Before Elizabeth Gurney reached her seventeenth year, she commenced the practice of recording, in the form of a journal, her secret conflicts, and the convictions of religious truth, as they were impressed upon her youthful heart, animating it with love to her Almighty Parent, and to all His intelligent creatures.

In some of her first entries, she says, "I feel by experience how much entering into the world hurts me; worldly company, I think, materially injures; it excites a false stimulus, such as a love of pomp, pride, vanity, jealousy, and ambition; it leads to think about *dress* and such *trifles;* and, when out of it, we fly to novels and scandal, or something of that kind, for entertainment." "If I have long to live in this world, may I bear misfortunes with fortitude; do what I can to alleviate the sorrows of others, and exert what power I have to increase happiness." "Pride and vanity are too much the incentives to most of the actions of men; they produce a love of admiration, and, in thinking of the opinions of others, we are too apt to forget the monitor within." In

her next entry she remarks, "Trifles occupy me far too much, such as dress," &c., &c. Again, she describes the effect of frivolous pursuits, — "greatly dissipated by hearing the band — idle and relaxed in mind — music has a great effect on me." Such were some of the varied and continuous workings of the opposing influences of nature and grace, in a mind not yet subdued by the power of the Holy Spirit, nor strengthened by a living faith in Christ, who alone can give the victory over the world. Whilst thus perceiving her own frequent deviations from the path of duty, and conscious that without assistance from on high she could never attain any settled peace of soul, or fulfil the purpose designed by Him who had called her into being, it pleased Infinite Wisdom to direct the steps of one of his gospel messengers — a stranger from a foreign land — to the vicinity of her home. She listened to him as he preached the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, and, in a remarkable manner, did the heart-awakening appeal which he was led to utter, find a response in the convictions sealed on her mind by the Holy Spirit. The solemn truths which she heard were but very faintly perceived by her understanding, but she felt that they were blessed realities; and the baptizing power, that accompanied the declaration of them, penetrated the deepest recesses of her soul. The stability and the soundness of the impressions thus imbibed, may be tested by the influence which they exercised over her inclinations and conduct. She was, at this important

juncture, taken by her father to London, where she remained several weeks, exposed to a variety of temptations — introduced into the gayest circles of fashionable and polished life, frequenting theatres, the opera, and other places of diversion — all calculated to extinguish the feeble flame of devotion which had been kindled in her bosom; but, having tasted something of the peace and joy that result from yielding to the attractions of the love of God, the enticements of a vain world had lost much of their fascination; and her journal tells us, "I went to Drury Lane in the evening. I must own that I was extremely disappointed: to be sure the house was grand and dazzling, but I had no other feeling, whilst there, than that of wishing it over." Some days later, she says, "I own I enter into the gay world reluctantly. I do not like plays; I think them so artificial that they are, to me, not interesting, and all seems so — so *very* far from pure virtue and nature." But a few days afterwards she dwells on a *different* scene: "I went to meeting in the evening. I have not enough eloquence to describe it. William Savery's sermon was, in the first part, very affecting; it was from the Revelations: he explained his text beautifully, and awfully; *most* awfully I felt it; he next described the sweets of religion and the spirit of prayer: how he *did* describe it — his prayer was beautiful; I think I felt to pray *with* him." Thus this American visitor, who had been the instrument employed to sow in her heart the seeds of Divine Truth, was also enabled to water and nurture them.

She records the effects of his ministrations, and adds, "My idea is, that true humility and lowliness of heart is the first grand step towards true religion. I fear and tremble for myself; but I must humbly look to the Author of all that is good and great, and I may say, humbly pray that he will take me as a sheep strayed from His flock, and once more let me enter the fold." Truly, these reflections, penned before she was eighteen years of age, evidence that she was learning in the school of Christ. In reference to this eventful period of her life she writes, thirty years afterwards; "Here ended this important and interesting visit to London, where I learned much and had much to digest. I saw and entered various scenes of gaiety, many of our first public places, attended balls, and other places of amusement; I saw many interesting characters in the world, some of them of considerable eminence in that day. It was like the casting die in my life: however, I believe it was in the ordering of Providence, and that the lessons then learned are, to this day, valuable to me. I consider one of the important results was, the conviction of these things being wrong, from seeing them and feeling their effects: I wholly gave up, on my own ground, attending all places of amusement: I saw they tended to promote evil; therefore, if I could attend them without being hurt myself, I felt that, in entering them, I lent my aid to promote that, which I was sure (from what I saw) hurt others; led many from the paths of rectitude and chastity, and brought them into much sin. I felt the vanity and

folly of what are called the pleasures of this life, of which the tendency is, *not to satisfy*, but eventually *to enervate and injure the heart and mind:* those only are *real* pleasures which are of an innocent nature, and are used as recreations subjected to the Cross of Christ. I was, in my judgment, much confirmed in the infinite importance of religion, as the only real stay, guide, help, and comfort in *this* life, and the only means of our having a hope of partaking of a *better*. My understanding was increasingly open to receive its truths, although the glad tidings of the gospel of Christ were little — *very* little — if at all understood by me: I was like the blind man; I could hardly be said to have attained the state of seeing 'men as trees.' I obtained in this expedition a valuable knowledge of human character, from the variety I met with — though some were very dangerous associates for so young a person; and the way in which I was protected among them is, in my remembrance, very striking, and leads me to acknowledge that, at this most critical period of my life, the tender mercy of my God was marvellously displayed towards me. Can any one doubt that it was His Spirit which manifested to me the evil of my own heart, as well as that which I perceived around me; leading me to abhor it, and to hunger and thirst after Himself and His righteousness, and that salvation which cometh by Christ?" Thus were the circumstances of her early life, and the characteristics of her natural mind, rendered subservient to the great work to which she was appointed, and her

spirit became moulded into a vessel sanctified and made meet for the Master's use.

Early in life, Elizabeth Gurney had imbibed, as she says, "very sceptical or deistical principles;" but, under the converting influence of DIVINE GRACE, the SACRED VOLUME became, to her humbled spirit, inexpressibly precious, and the truths of the glorious gospel of Christ were gradually sealed upon her understanding. Whilst not yet eighteen she speaks of her heart being filled with "benevolence and affection," going every day to see a servant living near her home, who was sinking in a decline. She reads to him in the Bible, seeks to comfort him, and supplies his personal necessities. She endeavours watchfully to regulate her conduct by christian rules: "First; never lose any time — always be in the habit of being employed. Second; never err in the least in *truth*. Third; never say an ill thing of a person when I can say a good thing: not only *speak* charitably but *feel* so. Fourth; never be irritable or unkind to any one. Fifth; never indulge myself in luxuries that are not necessary. Sixth; do all things with consideration; and when my path to act right is most difficult, feel confidence in *that power* that alone is able to assist me."

The sphere of active duty on which, through the influence of the Saviour's love, this young person was gradually induced to enter now became enlarged, and she devoted the evening of each recurring first-day of the week, to the instruction of some of her poorer neighbours, reading to them "the New Testament

and religious books for an hour." She also took great delight in forming and superintending a school, on her father's premises, for the poor children of Earlham and the adjoining parishes; and as benevolence became a marked and settled feature of her character, it expelled from her heart the love of pleasure and self-indulgence.

True religion produced its genuine fruits — she could no longer enjoy any recreation that tended to obscure the sense of an ever-present and omnipotent Judge, or to draw her from that "fear of the Lord" which "is a fountain of life, preserving from the snares of death." "How little," she remarks, "is the mind capable of really feeling that we are all in the presence of God, who overlooks every action: should we not tremble when we think of it? *Virtue alone* can make this thought a *happy* one."

In the summer of 1798, just after attaining the age of eighteen, she accompanied her father and sisters on a tour to the West of England and through Wales. Whilst at Plymouth, an officer of the Marines invited the party "to hear a very famous marine band;" Elizabeth declined to accept his kindness, because she considered it "wrong even to give countenance to a thing that inflames men's minds to destroy each other:" "it is," she says, "truly giving encouragement as far as lies in my power, to what I most highly disapprove, therefore I think I am right to stay at home." On the same day, they went on board a man-of-war: Elizabeth writes, "It was a fine but melancholy sight. I may gain some information

by it, but it is not what I quite approve of, the same as the band. My heart feels most anxious, this night, that I may go right, for straight and narrow is the path that leadeth to eternal life, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction. I feel much satisfaction attending my not going to the review — as soon as I determined to give it up inclination vanished, and now would lead me to stay at home." Some deep emotions, of a character entirely opposed to those which must be excited by dissipating or worldly pleasures, became strongly impressed upon the heart of this youthful traveller: she saw, she remarks, "a sad number of poor sailors and women; I longed to do them good, to try to make them sensible of the evil state they appear to be in." The christian solicitude which thus dwelt on her spirit, originating in the love of God, was of no transient nature — it remained fixed, as in the depths of her spiritual being, during *twenty-seven years*, until, in 1825, an opportunity presented itself for the outpouring of this hidden spring of gospel interest, by a religious meeting at Devonport, at which more than fifteen hundred (mostly of the lowest class) were addressed by her in powerfully attractive invitation to repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. In the near prospect of that meeting, her heart, she says, "was ready to fail, fears got hold of me, and almost had dominion over me. I may, I think, say it was, before it ended, a glorious time, much solemnity prevailed amongst us; the power of the great and good Spirit appearing to reign over all.

I cannot help humbly trusting that the fruit will remain."

But we recur to the journey — the most interesting feature of it was, to the mind of Elizabeth, a visit to Colebrook Dale, where she became associated with some relatives and friends who were conspicuous for piety and benevolence. Several of them were excellent ministers of the gospel. At the close of a pleasant evening, spent in company with her father and sisters, and some members of the families of the Colebrook Dale Friends, all the party became sensible of the presence and love of the Heavenly Father, attracting them to that true worship which consists in a deep prostration of the soul and all its faculties in adoration of the Most High; and which, however little it may be comprehended by too many professing christians, is, assuredly, no cunningly devised fable. Describing the occasion, Elizabeth Gurney says, "My heart began to feel itself silenced before God, and without looking at others I found myself under the shadow of His wing, and I soon discovered that the rest were in the same state; my mind felt clothed with light as with a garment."

Elizabeth Gurney returned from this excursion with a conviction that the line of duty, designed for her by Infinite Wisdom, was clearly marked as that which would lead her to adopt the habits and language of Friends. Yielding to this impression, she was enabled to enter on a path that eventually led to results that, in their importance, and beneficial influence on the human family, could never have been contemplated by the aid of mere human foresight.

On being again settled at home, she resumed her usual habits of visiting and relieving the poor, especially extending help to the sick, reading the Bible to them, and teaching their children. Her school numbered more than seventy pupils. She taught them without assistance, the means of instruction being derived from the stores of knowledge which she had herself obtained by study and reflection: for books suited to their comprehension, or pictorial representations, were not then in use.

Being thus devoted to the fulfilment of important duties, she became increasingly capable of rightly estimating the relative value of temporal pursuits. She felt that the amusements, in which she had been accustomed to indulge, involved a waste of that inestimable treasure, Time — given to prepare for eternity, and to promote the glory of God: she could no longer derive satisfaction from entering the dance, or from music and singing; yet she exercised a remarkable degree of control over her own feelings, and great caution in assuming habits of self-denial. She writes, "My mind is in an uncomfortable state. I am astonished to find that I have felt a scruple at music — my mind is rather uneasy after I have been spending time in it. These cannot be sensations of my own making, for I have such happiness when I overcome my worldly self, and, when I give way to it, am uneasy."

Some selections from her journal may further explain the workings of her mind amid the conflict between nature and grace.

"Tenth month, 17th. I have now two things heavily weighing on my mind — dancing and singing: so sweet and so pretty do they seem: but as surely as I do either, so surely does a dark cloud come over my mind. Can such feelings be my own putting on? They seem to affect my whole frame, mental and bodily. They cannot be from myself. Is it worth while to continue in so small a pleasure for so much pain?" "If I could make a rule never to give way to vanity, excitement, or flirting, I do not think I should object to dancing; but it always leads me into some one of these faults; indeed, I never remember dancing without feeling one, if not a little of all the three, and sometimes a great deal."

Two months later; "How much my natural heart does love to sing; but, if I give way to the ecstacy that singing sometimes produces on my mind, it carries me far beyond the centre, it increases all the wild passions, and works on enthusiasm. Many say and think that it leads to religion: it *may* lead to *emotions* of religion, but *true* religion appears to me to be in a deeper recess of the heart, where no earthly passion can produce it." As she followed the gentle leadings of the Spirit of Truth, she became decided in rejecting all that appeared to obstruct her enjoyment of the Saviour's love; and she writes, second month, 1799, "I have great reason to believe Almighty God is directing my mind to the haven of peace: at least, I feel that I am guided by a Power not my own. I took courage and tried to follow the

directions of this voice; I felt enlightened, even happy."

The winter of 1799 brought with it considerations, of high importance, in consequence of her receiving a proposal of marriage from Joseph Fry. Her sensitive nature shrunk from so momentous a subject; and, for a time, she seemed unwilling to encounter the responsibility. But, on the renewal of her friend's solicitation, it claimed her serious attention; and, about eight months afterwards, they were united in marriage, and became settled as residents in Mildred Court, London. With deep religious feeling, and a devout trust in God, she entered into this solemn engagement. The farewell visits to her indigent neighbours, who had been the participants of her benevolent care, were mournful to her and to them. Of her scholars she says, "When all my poor children came, it was rather a melancholy time to me: there were about eighty-six of them: many of them wept; and when they went away, I shed my tears also."

In the new sphere in which she was placed, her first desire was, that she might faithfully serve her Redeemer, and promote in the hearts of those around her, the government of His Holy Spirit. The daily practice of publicly reading in the family some portion of the Sacred Volume, was conscientiously observed; each morning commencing with this religious engagement. The sorrows of the afflicted and needy excited her wonted sympathies; and the training of children in habits of industry, and the endeavour to

imbue their minds with the fear and love of their Creator, continued to claim her sedulous attention, and we find her during the first year of her married life, visiting the school of Joseph Lancaster, consisting of a large number of poor, ragged children, crowded into a garret in Southwark; where, struggling with difficulties and embarrassments, the genius of this remarkable youth devised and carried out the system of popular education, now known as that of "the British and Foreign School Society;" which, for the last fifty years, has been gradually extending the blessing of christian instruction, not only in England, but also in various regions of the earth. Elizabeth Fry conversed with Lancaster on his school plans; and makes the following judicious reflection, as she recurs to the visit; "I felt a wish that the young man might be preserved in humility; but I know, from experience, that it is a hard matter when we have the apparent approbation of many, and particularly of those whom we esteem."

In her almsgiving, she was liberal but retiring: in dispensing it, she did not shrink from exertions that involved much sacrifice of personal ease: she carefully investigated the circumstances of those who applied for relief; and, after a fatiguing "search in one of the most disagreeable parts of the city," she remarks, "I felt quite in my element, serving the poor; and although I was much tired, yet it gave me much pleasure: it is an occupation that my nature is so fond of: I wish not to take merit to myself."

Her solicitude on account of the *temporal* interests of her fellow-creatures increased as time passed on: but there was a spring of Divine love in the depths of her soul, which, emanating from the Fountain of goodness and blessing, was gradually rising in life and strength, until it surmounted every obstruction, and flowed in streams of heavenly influence, to the comfort and edification of many a christian pilgrim.

The earliest impressions made on her mind by religious conviction, were accompanied by a presentiment — often nearly obscured — but, from one time to another, revived with additional clearness, that, if faithful to her God, she would be called by Him to publish the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. Her spirit was, by nature, timid and shrinking, and nothing short of the direction and support of her Almighty Father could suffice to prepare her for so solemn and arduous an engagement, or guide her safely in the performance of it.

Perhaps, some readers of this "Sketch" may be inclined to refuse assent to the principle, always recognized by the Society of Friends, that, through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the church of Christ, the gift of the ministry is dispensed, *without distinction of sex*, to individuals, called of God to this sacred vocation.

Elizabeth Fry was no stranger to the conflict between a fervent desire to yield, in child-like submission, to the Divine will, and the fear lest, in ad-

mitting a belief that this most weighty and important service was appointed for her by her Lord, she might be subject to the impulse of delusion. For more than eleven years did she wait ere the prospect, which was presented to her mind in youth, became matured and realized, and she felt strengthened to follow in the footsteps of holy women, who, not only under the Mosaic dispensation, but also in the first and purest age of Christianity, exercised the gift of prophecy. And here let the serious reader, who, whilst he would reverently accept the scriptural record respecting Anna in the temple, and the "four daughters" of Philip "who did prophesy," may nevertheless be disposed to doubt the continuance of this gift to the weaker sex in the church, allow himself candidly to meditate on the declaration of the apostle Peter, uttered on the day of Pentecost, that the prediction of the prophet Joel was then fulfilled; "and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy." And that this out-pouring of the Spirit, and this prophesying, both of servants and handmaidens, was designed to be no merely temporary blessing to the followers of Christ, appears evident from the apostle's added declaration, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and

to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."*

But there is yet *another* test, which may surely be admitted as affording a conclusive testimony that the mission of this devoted woman was fulfilled in obedience to the manifested will of her God. The Lord Jesus has instructed us that "Every tree is known by its fruit:" and how strikingly were the genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit manifested in the life and conduct of Elizabeth Fry, and in what varied abundance were her ministerial labours rendered effectual, to the sowing, in many hearts, of the seed of Christ's kingdom! It was through following, in simple faith, the guidance of her Lord's Spirit, that she became so influenced by His love and power, as to be qualified for the remarkable line of service into which she was led. Subjected to His Divine instructions, she was made sensible that no finite mind

* The language in Paul's epistle to the Corinthian church, forbidding the women to speak and ask questions in their congregations, has been much dwelt on, as evidence that the public ministry of females is not admissible in christian assemblies for worship: but such an application of the apostle's directions must involve a plain contradiction of his previous injunctions in the same epistle, where he describes the manner in which women should be attired, or should demean themselves, when publicly praying or prophesying. Those whom he commanded to "keep silence in the church" could not be engaged in that exercise of prophecy which he had just before spoken of, as "speaking unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort."

could adequately conceive the unutterable value of an immortal soul, destined to exist in happiness or misery throughout eternity; and her heart so overflowed with the boundless love and compassion of the Redeemer, that she willingly resigned every enjoyment, and directed every energy, for the holy purpose of becoming instrumental in rescuing fellow-probationers from the deadly grasp of Satan, and attracting them to Christ, who alone can deliver from his power.

It was at Norwich, in the year 1809, beside the grave of her beloved father, that, bowed under the mighty hand of God, and brought into a state of deep inward as well as external stillness, her spirit was so filled with a sense of the Saviour's presence and love, that she felt constrained to offer, in prayer and praise, a public confession of His goodness and mercy. In recording the circumstances of this solemn day, she says, "a quiet, calm, and invigorated state, mental and bodily, was my portion afterwards."

Fervent was her daily prayer for almighty aid and guidance: and her record of the exercises of her devoted spirit bespeaks that her petitions arose as continual incense. "O Lord," she writes, "I pray Thee, preserve Thy poor handmaid in the hour of temptation, and enable me to follow Thee in the way of Thy requirings, even if they lead me into suffering and unto death." "I may, in a measure, adopt the language, 'my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,' when I feel as I do to-day — I fear for myself, lest even this great

mercy should prove a temptation, and lead me to come before I am called, or enter on service I am not prepared for: but in all these things I have but one place of safety to take refuge in. Be pleased, then, Oh Lord! Thou who knowest my heart and all its temptations, be pleased to preserve me, and enable me to do thy will, in strength and in weakness, when it leads into the hardest crosses, as well as in the way of rejoicing."

Elizabeth Fry's engagements in the ministry were attended with a power and unction that, in no small degree humbled and contrited the hearts of the hearers; and her fellow-members could, with solemn thankfulness, recognize the gift which they believed to be bestowed on her, by the Holy Head of the church, for the edification of the body in love. But it was not only by those professors, with whom she was most closely associated, that the clear stamp of christian unity was placed on her gospel labours. Many persons of learning and piety manifested their approval, and testified to the powerful efficacy of her ministrations. On the day when the Bible Society was established at Norwich in 1811, a large company dined at Earlham Hall; Elizabeth Fry was then on a visit there, and at the table she was surrounded by six clergymen of the Established Church, three dissenting ministers, besides some of the Society of Friends — In detailing the circumstances of the day, she says, "a very little before the cloth was removed, such a power came over me of love, I believe I may say life, that I thought I must ask for silence, and

then supplicate the Father of mercies for His blessing, both of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven, upon those who thus desired to promote His cause, by spreading the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures." She knelt and offered prayer. "It was," she says, "like having our High Priest amongst us; independently of this power His poor instruments are *nothing*, but *with* this power how much is effected! I understood many were in tears, I believe all were bowed down spiritually." Soon after Elizabeth Fry had taken her seat, a Baptist minister said, "This is an act of worship." — A clergyman added, "We want no wine, for there is *that* amongst us that does instead."— The excellent and devoted C. F. Steinkoff then expressed his unity, saying that he *felt the Spirit of prayer*, although, being a foreigner, he could not understand all the words in which it had been uttered. Another clergyman made some weighty remarks on the manner in which the Almighty visited his people; that neither sex, nor anything else, stood in the way of His grace. Joseph Hughes, one of the Secretaries of the Bible Society, gave, in a letter, an interesting description of this occasion, in which he remarks, "after the dinner on the day of the Meeting, the pause encouraged by the Society of Friends was succeeded by a devout address to the Deity by a female minister, Elizabeth Fry, whose manner was impressive, and whose words were so appropriate, that none present can ever forget the incident, or ever advert to it without emotions, alike powerful and pleasing. The

first emotion was *surprise;* the second, *awe;* the third, *pious fervour.* As soon as we were re-adjusted at the table, I thought it might be serviceable to offer a remark that proved the co-incidence of my heart with the devotional exercise in which we had been engaged; this had the desired effect: Mr. Owen and others suggested accordant sentiments, and we seemed generally to feel like the disciples, whose hearts burned within them as they walked to Emmaus."

After being again settled at home, Elizabeth Fry enters in her journal the fervent petitions of her soul, as follows: "May the state of my heart be such, that I may with truth say, Here am I, Lord! do with me what thou wilt, only make me what thou wouldst have me to be." "Grant me, O Lord! wisdom and strength to proclaim Thy power and Thy praise; that, if made use of at all, others, as well as myself, may be drawn nearer to Thee, and wholly give Thee praise; never taking, or giving, that glory to the creature, which belongs alone to the Creator."

In allusion to some extended religious engagements, she says, in a letter to a friend, "Having been made instrumental to warn and encourage others, may I not become a cast-away myself — Is it not enough to feel a Power, better than ourselves, influencing and strengthening us to do the work that, we humbly trust, is the Lord's? for what honour, favour, or blessing, so great as being engaged in the service of Him whom we love, in whatever way it be, whether performing one duty or another, and having a little evidence granted us that we are doing His

will, or endeavouring to do it? I peculiarly feel, in ministerial duties, that I have no part, because the whole appears a gift, — the willing heart, the power, and every thing attending it; the poor creature has only to remain passive."

Many domestic and relative interests, especially a frequent attendance on the sick and afflicted, called forth the energies of this dedicated christian. The unction of heavenly love that actuated her spirit, imparted in a remarkable degree, the qualification to console, as well as to instruct, those who were brought low under the chastening hand of the Lord. It especially attracted her to the abject and the wretched. Within half a mile of her country residence at Plashet, there were many of the poorest and most neglected class; a considerable number of them the lowest description of Irish; she often visited them and investigated their necessities, which she relieved with judicious care; supplying clothing and drugs, and, in the winter season, an abundant provision of excellent soup, which furnished a frequent and nutritious meal to hundreds of poor persons. Her wonted concern for the right training of children induced her to promote the establishment of a school for girls. It was organized on the Lancasterian system, and soon numbered upwards of seventy. She was a warm advocate for vaccination, and, having been instructed by an eminent physician, was skilful in performing the operation: by her inoculating the children of her indigent neighbours, the small-pox was scarcely ever known in the surrounding villages.

In a lane near Plashet there was annually an encampment of Gipsies, who were attracted in that direction by a fair. Elizabeth Fry assisted them, from year to year, with clothing for their children, — frequently with some medicines, and she furnished them with Bibles, at the same time earnestly exhorting them to forsake sin, and to seek the redemption which is in Christ.

Thus varied were the claims upon her sympathy and exertions, as she sought to alleviate the wants and sufferings of those around her. She was not, herself, exempt from many deep solicitudes, and some heavy sorrows, in connection with her own interesting household. She had a large family of young children, to whom she was a most tender and devoted mother. One of these precious treasures — a lovely and precocious little girl — was taken from her affectionate parents before she reached her fifth year. Elizabeth Fry had also to mingle in scenes of much affliction at Earlham, from the decease, first of a sister-in-law, and then of the widowed brother. While she acutely shared in the sense of bereavement, she was enabled to minister consolation to the beloved circle with whom she mourned. In pathetic, yet devout expression, she thus describes her emotions: "Although it pleases my Heavenly Father thus to chastise me, yet I am permitted to feel that He *doth* love those whom He chasteneth: I feel His love very near."

For a considerable time the spirit of Elizabeth Fry was frequently brought under concern on account of

the most miserable and degraded portion of the community — the inmates of prisons. On a very affecting occasion, (one which was then almost continually occurring,) the execution of several convicts, four members of the Society of Friends, obtained admittance to the great metropolitan jail of Newgate — they had an opportunity of expressing, in language of fervent christian exhortation, their deep solicitude on behalf of these poor criminals, about to be hurried into the presence of an Omniscient Judge. The benevolent visitors had permission also to pass into that portion of the building in which the *women* were confined; and the representations of these Friends, particularly those of the late excellent William Forster, induced Elizabeth Fry to inspect the state of the female department of the prison. It was an intensely cold season, and the sufferings of the wretched women were, from their being destitute of sufficient clothing, so great as to demand immediate exertion to relieve them.

At that time all the female prisoners in Newgate were crowded together into two wards and two cells — these four rooms contained nearly three hundred women, with their numerous children — they consisted of the tried and untried, misdemeanants, and felons; without any classification, without employment, and with no other superintendence than that of a man and his son, who had the charge of them by night and by day. In the same rooms did these poor creatures live, and cook, and wash, sleeping, without bedding, on the floor, the boards of which inclined

upwards against the wall to supply the want of a pillow. Thus, covered with a few tattered garments, filthy in the extreme, affording scarcely any protection from the inclemency of the weather, were these miserable women first visited by Elizabeth Fry. She was accompanied by Anna Buxton. The scene on which they were about to enter was one of the wildest disorder. Drunkenness prevailed to a fearful extent: for the prisoners were visited by many of their former degraded associates, who responded to their clamorous begging by giving them money, with which they purchased beer and spirits from a regular tap in the prison. Swearing, gambling, and fighting, filled up every hour of the day. Even the governor was reluctant to enter this portion of the building. He advised the two female Friends to leave, under his care, their watches and purses, fearing they would be snatched from them; but this kind suggestion was not acted upon. Faith and love divested them of all apprehension of danger, and, without the protection of man, they ventured amongst this disorganized multitude. The sorrowful and neglected condition of both women and children deeply affected their hearts; and Elizabeth Fry used much exertion to prepare and supply suitable clothing for the destitute. On the occasion of their third visit, she makes the following entry in her journal: "Yesterday we were some hours at Newgate with the poor female felons, attending to their outward necessities. We had been twice previously. Before we went away, dear Anna Buxton uttered a few words in supplication; and,

very unexpectedly to myself, I did also. I heard weeping, and I thought they appeared much tendered: a very solemn quiet was observed: it was a striking scene; the poor people on their knees around in their deplorable condition."

The efforts which Elizabeth Fry had made to alleviate the miseries of these wretched beings could not escape notice — they elicited much cordial approbation, particularly from many of her most esteemed friends; and, as it was manifested by expressions of unity, it raised in her heart a fervent prayer for preservation in humility and dependence on her Lord. She writes, under date of Second month, 15th, 1814, "My fear for myself, the last few days, is, lest I should be exalted by the evident unity of my dear friends whom I greatly value; and also my natural health and spirits being good; and being engaged in some laudable pursuits, more particularly seeing after the prisoners in Newgate. Oh, how deeply, how *very* deeply, I fear the temptation of ever being exalted, or self-conceited! I cannot preserve myself from this temptation, any more than being unduly cast down, or crushed by others. Be pleased, O Lord! to preserve me: for the deep inward prayer of my heart is, that I may ever walk humbly before Thee; and also before all mankind. Let me never, in any way, take that glory to myself which belongs alone unto Thee, if, in Thy mercy, Thou shouldst ever enable one so unworthy, either to do good, or to communicate."

A considerable time elapsed before Elizabeth Fry

again visited the Newgate prison; and, during the interval, many important events occurred, and she was variously exercised in the school of affliction. She was permitted to endure much bodily indisposition, her husband was subjected to considerable loss of property, and death removed from her some tenderly beloved friends. Yet, she was frequently constrained, through the influence of the Lord's Spirit, to devote herself to His service in the ministry of the word: and her labours were remarkably blessed to the arousing of the careless, the comforting of the mourners, and the strengthening of many a feeble one in the ranks of her fellow-disciples.

The destitute and the ignorant of every class, were, as their necessities became known to her, still the objects of her care. But no occupations, conflicts, or sufferings, could efface from her heart the impression which it had received on her visits to Newgate. Deep and solemn was her interest on behalf of the degraded inmates of that receptacle of vice and misery: and a conviction became gradually sealed on her spirit that she was called by Him, to whom she had been enabled to dedicate every talent committed to her trust, to labour, as He might see meet to open the way before her, for the moral reformation of those who had rendered themselves obnoxious to the penalties of justice: and most especially did she feel a persuasion that it was the design of the merciful Redeemer, that she should yield herself His willing instrument in seeking to awaken perishing sinners, slumbering on the verge of endless perdition; and to

invite them to come unto Him who alone could bring them "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

Nothing short of the operation of Divine love could have produced, in the mind of this refined and delicate woman, a willingness to forego domestic comfort, congenial association, and personal ease, and even to risk her own reputation, and to enter upon a line of service most arduous and painful, from which her nature recoiled with dread. But animated by the full belief that the sacrifice was required by her Lord, and humbly depending on His help and strength, her faith surmounted every obstruction; and she entered on the peculiar sphere of duty, which, through the remainder of her remarkable life, engaged so large a share of her benevolent efforts. She ventured again amongst the female prisoners in Newgate: she found them sunk into a condition of the utmost depravity; yet so wonderfully did the sense of her divine Master's presence and power sustain her spirit, that she requested to be left *alone* with them: she remained with them for some hours — Her dignified deportment, her gentle accents of love and kindness, restrained their ferocity, and she succeeded at length, in her attempts to gain their quiet attention, whilst she read to them the parable of the Lord of the vineyard; afterwards addressing them on the eleventh hour, and on Christ having come to save sinners, even those who might have passed the greater portion of their lives in estrangement from Him — She particularly noticed the children, pining for want of

proper food, air, and exercise, and almost without clothing. She endeavoured to impress on the mothers the grievous circumstances in which their misconduct had involved their helpless offspring — and when the hearts of these wretched women were, in some measure, softened, she proposed to them the establishment of a school, to which they readily assented; and she desired them to consider the plan, leaving them to select a governess from among themselves. On the following day she again visited them, being then accompanied by her friend Mary Sanderson, who thus described the scene; "The railing was crowded with half-naked women, struggling together for the front situations with the most boisterous violence, and begging with the utmost vociferation." She "felt as if she were going into a den of wild beasts — quite shuddering when the door was closed, and she was locked in with such a herd of novel and desperate companions." — These benevolent visitors were, however, able to organize the projected school, and the prisoners had selected a young woman to act as mistress of it, who proved peculiarly suited to the task, and who became one of the first fruits of the christian labour in the prison — giving evidence of a real conversion. She received a free pardon; but she was soon affected by pulmonary disease; and, after enduring her illness with much patience, and obtaining, as there was good ground to believe, peace and reconciliation with God, through a gracious Redeemer, she died in the hope of a blessed immortality. But it was not until *repeated* efforts had been made for

the improvement of these wretched women, that their brutal propensities became permanently restrained.

On a subsequent occasion, another faithful coadjutor in the work, Elizabeth Pryor, found them, as she says, "seated about the yard, with ferocious countenances." — "From the prison-door one issued," (probably a felon just then brought to the jail,) "yelling like a wild beast: she rushed round the area, with her arms extended, tearing everything of the nature of a cap from the heads of the other women." But this very woman was, however, through the grace and mercy of God, humanized under the instruction of these christian visitors: she became "a well-conducted person," and married respectably.

Elizabeth Fry's solicitude to effect a reform in the habits of these miserable outcasts was cordially approved by the sheriffs of London, the governor and chaplain of Newgate, and by other influential persons; yet, with scarcely any exception, the attempt to reduce to order such an unruly and vicious assemblage, soon became viewed as the result of a merely visionary scheme, and discouragements were presented on every hand. At a subsequent period, she was required to give evidence before the House of Commons, respecting the condition in which she had found the female department of the prison, and of her success in endeavouring to remedy the evils which abounded there. She stated that it was in their daily visits to the school, that they were "witnesses of the dreadful proceedings that went forward, —

the begging, swearing, gaming, fighting, singing, dancing, dressing up in men's clothes; scenes too bad to be described, so that we did not think it suitable to admit young persons with us." Elizabeth Fry, and the heroic little band who joined her in the engagement, became convinced that, at least, some good might be effected by proper regulations; their kindness towards the prisoners had won their respect, and their own minds were inspired with hope and confidence. With remarkable wisdom did Elizabeth Fry make arrangements for a code of laws to be observed by the prisoners; and she formed a committee, consisting of the wife of a clergyman and eleven members of the Society of Friends, who, in 1817, were regularly organized as "An Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate." They stated their purpose "to provide for the clothing, the instruction, and the employment of the women; to introduce them to a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety, and industry, which may render them docile and peaceable whilst in prison, and respectable when they leave it."

The concurrence of the city magistrates was obtained; but much doubt was expressed as to how far the women would submit to the requisite restraints and regulations. To ascertain their dispositions on this all-important question, the sheriffs met the members of the "Association" at the prison. The women were assembled, and in the presence of the sheriffs, the governor, and the ordinary, they were

asked by Elizabeth Fry whether they were willing to abide by the rules which were so indispensable for the accomplishment of the object so much desired by all. The women fully and unanimously assured her of their determination to obey them strictly. The sheriffs addressed them on the importance of observing these rules. Having thus far succeeded, the next business was to provide employment for the prisoners, and a suitable apartment for their industrial occupation: the latter object was immediately attended to by the sheriffs, who sent carpenters to prepare a work-room; and the partners of a respectable house in London arranged to supply articles for the prisoners' manufacture. A few days afterwards, the committee met in the large apartment which had been fitted up;—and all the women being assembled, Elizabeth Fry addressed them:—"She began by describing to them the comforts to be derived from industry and sobriety, and contrasted the happiness and peace of those who are dedicated to a course of virtue and religion, with the sad experience of their former life and its consequences; and, alluding to their awful guilt in the sight of God, appealed to themselves whether its wages, even here, were not utter misery and ruin. She then dwelt upon the motives which had brought her and her associates into Newgate: they had left their homes and their families to mingle amongst those from whom all others fled, animated by an ardent and affectionate desire to rescue their fellow-creatures from evil." She then told them that it was "not intended that the visitors should comman-

and the prisoners obey, but it was to be understood that all were to act in concert; that not a rule should be made, or a monitor appointed, without their full and unanimous concurrence; that, for this purpose, each of the rules should be read and put to the vote: and she invited those who might feel any disinclination to any particular, freely to state their opinions." The rules were then read; and, as each was proposed, every hand was held up in token of approbation. With the same formalities each of the monitors was proposed, and all were unanimously approved. When this business was concluded, one of the visitors read aloud the 21st chapter of Matthew — the parable of the barren fig-tree being applicable to the state of the audience. After a period of silence, the monitors, with their respective classes withdrew to their wards in the most orderly manner."

Within a few days from this most interesting occasion, the lord mayor, the sheriffs, and several of the aldermen attended the morning reading of the Bible. They requested that no alteration in the usual practice should take place. The prisoners were assembled; one of the committee read a chapter; then, after a pause of silence, the women proceeded to their various avocations. An eye-witness who described the scene, added, "their attention during the time of reading, their orderly and sober deportment, their decent dress, the absence of everything like tumult, noise, or contention, the obedience and respect shown by them, and the cheerfulness visible in their countenances and manners, conspired to ex-

cite the astonishment and admiration of their visitors Many of these knew Newgate, had visited it a few months before, and had not forgotten the painful impressions made by a scene, exhibiting, perhaps, the very utmost limits of misery and guilt."

Encouraged by many concurring circumstances, the newly formed "ladies' committee" now introduced a matron into Newgate; — the prisoners were divided into classes and placed under her superintendence; but some of the committee, who had been in the regular practice of spending the whole of each day in the oversight and instruction of these poor outcasts, continued to pass some hours daily in this important field of labour. The surveillance of the "man and his son," who had before had the entire charge of the women, was dispensed with, and the corporation of London shared with the committee the expenses incurred by the substitution of female attendants. The following description of the contrast between the former circumstances of the prisoners and those which now marked their condition may be introduced — it was penned by a gentleman of respectability. "I went and requested permission to see Mrs. Fry, and was conducted by a turnkey to the entrance of the women's wards. On my approach no loud or dissonant sounds, or angry voices, indicated that I was about to enter a place (which had long had the appellation of) 'Hell above ground.' The court-yard, into which I was admitted, instead of being peopled with beings scarcely human, blaspheming, fighting, tearing each other's hair, or

gaming with a filthy pack of cards for the very clothes they wore, (which often did not suffice even for decency,) presented a scene where stillness and propriety reigned. I was conducted by a decently-dressed person, the newly appointed yards'-woman, to the door of a ward, where, at the head of a long table, sat a lady belonging to the Society of Friends. She was reading aloud to about sixteen women prisoners who were engaged in needle-work around it. Each wore a clean-looking blue apron and bib; with a ticket having a number on it suspended from her neck by a red tape. They all rose on my entrance, curtsied respectfully, and then, at a signal given, resumed their seats and employments. Instead of a scowl, leer, or ill-suppressed laugh, I observed upon their countenances an air of self-respect and gravity, a sort of consciousness of their improved character and the altered position in which they were placed. I afterwards visited the other wards, which were the counterparts of the first."

But we must recur to the journal of Elizabeth Fry, in order to observe the feelings and motives which influenced her, as she entered upon, and proceeded with, the arduous and weighty engagements which we have briefly detailed. Shortly after her earliest renewed visits to the prison, she writes, "I have been much occupied lately in forming a school in Newgate for the children of the poor prisoners, as well as young criminals, which has brought much peace and satisfaction with it; but my mind has been also deeply affected, in attending a poor woman who

was executed this morning. I visited her twice: this has been a time of deep humiliation to me, thus witnessing the consequences of sin. How should we watch and pray, that we fall not by little and little, become hardened, and commit greater sins." To her beloved sister, Rachel Gurney, (an excellent and faithful helper,) who had taken charge of some of her children — thus liberating her for a wider field of philanthropic exertion — she addressed the following lines, in the spring of 1817. "My heart, and mind, and time, are very much engaged in various ways. Newgate is a principal object, and I think that until I make some attempt at amendment in the plans for the women, I shall not feel easy: but if such efforts should prove unsuccessful, I think that I should then have tried to do my part, and be easy. ——I have felt, in thy taking care of my dearest girls, that thou art helping me to get on with some of these important objects, that I could not well have attended to if I had had all my dear flock around me." Her journal contains some most deeply affecting descriptions of her attendance on the wretched convicts, sentenced to terminate their criminal course at the gallows — there were, she says near the time of the last-mentioned date, a young woman, with six men, and the wife of one of them, whose execution was deferred, because she was about to add to her miserable family, already consisting of seven children. These victims of a sanguinary and cruel code were very varied in character; some obdurate and brutalized, some educated and philosophical: the husband

of the poor woman before alluded to, was in a state of maniacal frenzy: and the first-named young woman, (condemned for being accessory to robbing in a dwelling-house,)* "much hurried, distressed, and tormented in mind; her hands cold, and covered with something like the perspiration preceding death, and in a universal tremor." But a few hours before she was launched into eternity, Elizabeth Fry, at the unhappy creature's earnest entreaty, spent some time with her in "the condemned cell," and adds, "After a serious time with her, her troubled soul became calmed. But is it for man thus to take the prerogative of the Almighty into his own hands? Is it not his place rather to reform such, or restrain them from the commission of further evil? at least to afford poor, erring fellow-mortals, an opportunity of proving their repentance by amendment of life?"

Scenes, like that on which the reader has now dwelt, and which surely no feeling mind can contemplate without a thrill of horror, were of frequent recurrence; and often was the sensitive heart of this devoted christian harrowed to its utmost depth, as she visited, on the day or the night before they suffered, the wretched criminals whose lives were forfeited through the penal statutes then enforced. With what self-sacrificing love did she encounter the most appalling circumstances. How did she yield her spirit in

* One of the accomplices in this robbery, who confessed his guilt, as the principal actor, declared uniformly, and to the last moments, the innocence of this young woman — *her* guilt was never proved.

sympathy with the extremes of human misery; ministering the language of solemn warning, or pointing the abased and penitent sinner to that Almighty Redeemer, who "was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil," and whose power is sufficient to rescue from his grasp, even such as are sunk in the lowest gulf of vice, degradation, and woe. Most deeply impressive were the opportunities when, in the felon's dungeon, her fervent prayers were offered on behalf of those who were doomed to expiate their transgressions, by a violent and ignominious transition from the bar of the fallible mortal judge to the inconceivably awful tribunal of an Omniscient and Holy God.

The journal proceeds, "My mind and time have been much taken up with Newgate. I feel encouraged about our school; but I have suffered much about the hanging of the criminals. May I, in this important concern, be enabled to keep my eye singly unto the Lord, that what I do may be done heartily unto Him, and not, in any degree, unto man. May I be preserved humble, faithful, and persevering in it, as far as it is *right* to persevere. And, if consistent with the Divine will, may the blessing of the Most High attend it; that it may be made instrumental in drawing some out of evil, and leading and establishing them in the way everlasting, where they may find rest and peace."

A month later we read the following entry: "I have found, in my late attention to Newgate, a peace and prosperity in the undertaking, that I seldom, if

ever, remember to have done before. A way has very remarkably been opened for us, beyond all expectation, to bring into order the poor prisoners. Those who are in power are very willing to help us: in short, the time appears come to work amongst them. Already, from being like wild beasts, they appear harmless and kind. I am ready to say, in the fulness of my heart, surely 'it is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes;' so many are the providential openings of various kinds. Oh! if good should result, may the praise and glory of the whole be entirely given where it is due by us, and by all, in deep humiliation and prostration of spirit."

In a letter to her two eldest daughters, who, for nearly a year, had been the guests of their uncle, Daniel Gurney, at Runcton, under the care of their aunt, Rachel Gurney, Elizabeth Fry writes, "sixth month, 11th, 1817. Remember, my dear children, that if you wish to be real helpers to me and to your dear father, you must take heed to yourselves, and seek to keep your eye single to Him, who alone can enable you to do your duty towards yourselves, or towards us. For I am more and more convinced that, unless what we do is done heartily unto the Lord, it profiteth little, and availeth nothing. I cannot tell you, for I have not language to express it, the longing that I have that you, my sweet, dear children may go on in the right way. How far before all other things do I ask it for you, that, whilst here, you may be guided by His counsel, and afterwards received into glory."

On the 20th she welcomed her boys from school and her girls from Runcton, and writes, "To be once more surrounded by our sweet flock is pleasant, and appears cause for much thankfulness. May a blessing attend us amongst them, so that, in word and in deed, we may preach Christ: and, O gracious Lord! be pleased so to prosper our labours that they may all grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Thee." "Seventh month, 21st, I seem kept almost always, by night and by day, going again and again to the mercy-seat. I can hardly express what I have felt at times — groanings unutterable for my children, on their getting out of childhood, in their many temptations."

It was the particular desire of Elizabeth Fry that her labours, with those of her benevolent associates in the prison cause, might not become subjects of public notoriety: but, during the autumn of this year, a gentleman, who had witnessed the marvellous reformation effected in many who had been amongst the most vicious of the community, published, in some of the leading journals, a description of the efforts which had been made there, and the results produced. This circumstance, though painful to Elizabeth Fry's humble spirit, was however, over-ruled for the welfare of many; as it arrested public attention to the necessity of a general improvement in prison discipline: but in reference to it she says, "My having been brought publicly forward in the newspapers, respecting what I have been instrumental in doing at Newgate, has brought some anxiety with it: in the first place, as

far as *I* am concerned, that it may neither raise me too high, nor sink me too low — that, having what may appear my good works thus published, may never lead me, or others, to give either the praise or glory where it is not due. May I in this, and in all other things, experience preservation; for indeed, I cannot keep myself — may I be kept humble, watchful, faithful, and persevering." "Oh! the watchfulness required, not to bow to man, not to seek to gratify self-love, but rather, in humility and godly fear, to abide under the humiliation of the cross. Lord, be pleased so to help and strengthen me in this, that, for Thine own cause' sake, for my own soul's sake, and for the sake of my beloved family, I may, in no way, be a cause of reproach; but, in my life, conduct, and conversation, may glorify Thy great and ever excellent name."

"Twelfth mo., 17th. A remarkable blessing still appears to accompany my prison concerns, perhaps the greatest apparent blessing on my deeds that ever attended me. How have the spirits, both of those in power, and the poor, afflicted prisoners, appeared to be subjected! Most assuredly the power and the glory is alone due to the Author and Finisher of every good work. Things in this way thus prosper beyond my most sanguine expectations; but there are also deep humiliations for me."

Important duties, connected with the religious Society of which Elizabeth Fry was a highly esteemed member, claimed no inconsiderable portion of her time; and her solicitude for the spiritual welfare of

Her friends was frequently manifested, by her christian exhortations and by her fervent prayers that her fellow-professors might, through the powerful visitations of the Holy Spirit, be favoured to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The state of the prison having become so effectually improved, her attention to its concerns could be safely relaxed, and the labour more satisfactorily shared by others: she continued, however, to visit it several times during each week. Many letters were addressed to her by persons of influence; magistrates anxious to institute a process of reform in prisons under their control — benevolent individuals, of both sexes, wishing to aid in the work — all seeking for her counsel and assistance — thus necessarily occupying many hours in replying to these communications. Some of the most distinguished and influential persons in the kingdom desired to witness the reformed condition of Newgate, and Elizabeth Fry was consequently required to accompany them thither. Not a few of these became conspicuously enlisted in the cause of philanthropy, devoting their energies to the amelioration of prison discipline, and to the repeal of the most sanguinary enactments of the penal code. Elizabeth Fry received efficient and persevering aid from the late Sir T. F. Buxton: he had married her beloved sister, Hannah Gurney; and they were united to her, not only in the bond of kindredship and tender affection, but also by the powerfully actuating principle of christian philanthropy.

The altered arrangements of the prison entailed heavy pecuniary expenses, demanding resources which could not prudently be supplied, without an appeal to the generosity of benevolent friends; and most cordially was this appeal responded to by some wealthy individuals, particularly by several of the near connexions of Elizabeth Fry. Her brothers Samuel and Joseph John Gurney were especially, and at all times, her unfailing helpers; conscientiously approving her religious course, and her efforts for the public good, they contributed largely towards the promotion of them, and not a year passed over, during the period allotted her for service on earth, in which these noble-hearted christians did not place at her disposal a large amount from the funds entrusted to their stewardship.

When the regulations at Newgate had become firmly established, a necessity no longer existed for such indefatigable labour as had, for a considerable time, been indispensable; and, as several of the associated "committee" now shared between them the duty of visiting and instructing the prisoners — one of them assembling the women for a Scripture reading daily — Elizabeth Fry's attendance became more limited. On one particular day of each week she, however, devoted the forenoon to this important engagement, undertaking herself the public reading of the Bible — an office which she performed with peculiar solemnity and sweetness. The prison was, on the appointed morning, open to such visitors as it appeared suitable to admit, and her readings were

attended by a great number of persons, both English and Foreign, who were anxious to witness this extraordinary scene of order and reformation. Of her feelings, under these circumstances, we have an instructive transcript in her Journal: "Fourth month 29th, 1818 — May we more evidently *live*, in the *best* sense even, unto God. Since I last wrote, I have led rather a remarkable life; so surprisingly followed after by the great, and others, in my Newgate concerns: in short, the prison and myself are become quite a show, which is a very serious thing in many points. I believe that it certainly does much good to the cause, in spreading amongst all ranks of society a considerable interest in the subject, also a knowledge of "Friends" and of their principles; but my own standing appears critical in many ways. In the first place, the extreme importance of my walking strictly, and circumspectly, *amongst all men, in all things*, and not bringing discredit upon the cause of truth and righteousness. In the next place, after our readings there, the ministry is a most awful calling; thus, publicly amongst men, to be in season and out of season. I desire to live, (more particularly in these things,) in the fear of God, rather than of man; and that neither good report nor evil report, neither the approbation nor disapprobation of man, should move me in the least; but that my eye should be kept quite single to the great and good Shepherd and Bishop of souls: this is my continual prayer for myself." Surely this "continual prayer" was graciously an-

swered — and the blessing from on high extended itself, through the instrumentality of this servant of the Lord, to those who were congregated on these solemn occasions. She was deeply imbued with earnest desire for the everlasting well-being of every class among men; none were too exalted in earthly station, none too highly endowed by nature or by science, to share the deep solicitudes of her spirit; her prayers ascended to the Throne of Grace, for the out-pouring of that heavenly influence which alone could attract them to the Fountain of mercy and peace. But her sympathies were, in an especial manner, directed, in unspeakable yearnings, towards the wretched and debased; the misery, inseparable from sin and condemnation, stirred up from its depth every spring of tender commiseration which could flow into her bosom: the invitations of the Redeemer who "came to call sinners to repentance," were oft-times uttered by her with thrilling "demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" and many a heart that had been enslaved by the prince of darkness, and rendered obdurate by yielding itself his willing servant, was softened and bowed in penitence, through that constraining love which communicated its efficacious energy to those ministrations, by which, "in Christ's stead," she besought the wanderer and the prodigal to return unto the Father's house, and to become reconciled to God.

Notices of the remarkable effects produced on the minds of the visitors of every class, who witnessed those religious engagements in Newgate, might be

selected from the memoranda of many excellent persons,* an *extract* from one of them — that of a lady, noble in rank and in spirit — may be admitted int this brief "Sketch;" dated "June 2nd, 1820. — W passed through several wards, in which the mo perfect stillness prevailed; these were the forme scenes of all the riot and confusion of which we ha heard so much. After waiting a short time Mrs. Fry entered, saluting everybody in the most dignifie manner. The female convicts came in on a bel being rung, and took their seats at one end of th room with perfect order — each had her work, a which she employed herself till Mrs. Fry began reading. Mrs. Fry arranged a large Bible on her desk, and sat down: — her voice was so gentle that we wondered we could hear what she said, but remarkably mild and sweet. She began by requesting their *attention* — saying, 'I am desirous that your attention should be, as much as possible, undivided — notwithstanding our being subject to-day to the interruptions of company, it is equally important that your minds should be fixed on what I say — praying that the Holy Spirit may enlighten your understanding. I am going to read the 4th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.' They all laid aside their work, most of them fixed their eyes on the ground,

* For a more detailed narrative of these, and many other most deeply interesting circumstances in the life of Elizabeth Fry, the reader is referred to a volume entitled "Life of Elizabeth Fry, by Susanna Corder."

and we could not observe that more than two or three looked about afterwards, till she had done reading. She read the chapter slowly and impressively — the 6th, 28th, and 32nd verses appeared to affect them deeply — every word that she uttered seemed to be written in her own heart. She then turned to the book of Psalms. After a moment's pause, she turned back to the chapter she had been reading, and said, 'I was going to read a Psalm, but I thought I should be best satisfied to say a word on the chapter I have been reading; the greater part of it is so simple and clear, that a very little endeavour on your part will enable you to understand it; but there is one expression which perhaps may be obscure: "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." If you look only at the external, you may say, so many different opinions prevail — people are so divided as to what they think ought to be believed, how can they be said to have one faith? I have always viewed it very differently: "One Lord" — yea, and have not all christians the same Lord, which is Christ? and while we acknowledge Him our Master, look to Him for our justification, follow His precepts, obey His commandments, love Him, serve Him, He is our Lord — He is the "One Lord" of all who thus acknowledge Him as their Head. Again, "One Faith:" there is a diversity of opinions, but only one true saving faith, the faith which lives in the heart and becomes evident by its fruits, which lays hold of the promises, which actuates to all godliness, and produces the blessed effects of a holy life. This one true saving faith is

common to *all* christians, how exceedingly soever they may seem to differ. So also, "One Baptism:" there is one spiritual baptism of the heart — the Spirit of God sanctifying and renewing the heart, and creating it after God in righteousness and true holiness. In this manner we have all "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." What a sweet bond of unity is this? whereby we are not only brethren in this world, but may hope to meet in heaven, there to give glory to Him with one accord, for ever and for evermore.' Mrs. Fry then read the 86th Psalm. She then knelt down and prayed so beautiful a prayer — with such fervency, so rich a flow of ideas, and such perfect command of scripture language to clothe them in, that it is impossible to convey an idea of its beauty. This, after a few words from one of the company, concluded the service — the women retired in perfect order, each class separately, with its monitor from the front row; all making courtesies as they left the room."

The attention of Elizabeth Fry and of the visiting committee was by no means confined to Newgate. The female criminals in the other prisons of the metropolis soon came under their care. The confidence which was reposed in them by successive governments was evinced by the convict ships, in which females were transported to New South Wales, being placed under their especial care and superintendence. This was a most important part of their service, and the success that followed the admirable

regulations which they introduced into those vessels, was frequently acknowledged by the colonial authorities. Every poor convict was supplied with a variety of articles, needful to mitigate the sufferings attendant on the passage to the distant colony, and each one furnished with a copy of the Holy Scriptures.

It had been always the practice, on their removal from the prisons to the ships at Deptford, to convey them in open wagons amid assembled crowds, the prisoners and those who surrounded them being alike noisy and riotous; the disorder being maintained on the road, and in the boats. Elizabeth Fry prevailed on the governor to consent to their being taken in hackney coaches. The women were quiet and orderly, and she closed the procession by following them in her own carriage. Instead of the former plan, of herding together the convicts and their children in an inadequate space below the deck of the vessel, they were now, through the excellent arrangements of Elizabeth Fry and her faithful helpers, divided into classes, with a monitor (chosen by themselves) appointed to each; supplied also with work, which produced a profit received exclusively by the prisoners. An apartment was prepared for a school-room, one of the convicts being voluntarily engaged as mistress, for which service she was paid, at the end of the voyage, from a sum placed by the committee in the hands of the captain. A religious meeting with the poor women closed their personal communication with their benefactress. Solemnly impressive were these farewell interviews. Many a mournful

tear trickled down the cheeks of these desolate outcasts, and their sobs and their exclamations of sorrow followed their excellent friend, till they could see her no more.

The influence which, by *the force of kindness alone*, Elizabeth Fry maintained over the prisoners can scarcely be conceived: they regarded her with the deepest reverence, mingled with grateful love: one of them said it was "more terrible to be brought up before Mrs. Fry than before the judge." On one occasion she was informed that some were still gaming in the prison. She went alone, assembled the women, and told them what she had heard; that she feared it was true; dwelt on the evil effects of the sinful practice, and on the grief which the report had caused her; concluding with remarking that she should consider it a proof of their regard, if they would have the candour and the kindness to bring their cards to her. Soon after she had retired to the "ladies room," there was a gentle tap at the door, and in came a trembling girl, who, in a manner that indicated much feeling, expressed her sorrow for having broken the rule of so kind a friend. She handed to Elizabeth Fry her pack of cards; she was soon followed by another, and then by three others, until five packs were received, which Elizabeth Fry burned in their presence; assuring the transgressors that, so far from being remembered *against* them, she should think of it *in another way*. A few days afterwards they received presents — the first-named girl was, by her own particular desire, favoured with

a Bible. She had been a very bad girl, had conducted herself extremely ill on her trial; but she became orderly and amiable, so that she appeared "almost without a flaw," and it was "hoped would become a valuable member of society."

At this time, the marquis of Lansdowne moved for an address from the House of Lords to the prince regent, on the state of the prisons in the United Kingdom. He dwelt on "the efforts of that very meritorious individual, Mrs. Fry, who had come like the genius of good into the scene of misery and vice and had, by her wonderful influence and exertions, produced, in a short time, a most extraordinary reform amongst the most abandoned class." The speech of the marquis renewed, with still greater intensity, the interest which had already been excited, and admittance into Newgate was sought, with eager curiosity, by persons of almost every class; bishops, clergymen, magistrates, officers, and ladies of rank and influence.

During the succeeding autumn Elizabeth Fry, accompanied by her brother, J. J. Gurney, left the scene of her labours, on a tour in the north of England, and in Scotland. In the course of their journey they attended many meetings of their own religious community, in which they were enabled to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, to the edification of many. These assemblies were of a mingled character; for, wherever they went, the name of Elizabeth Fry had already been regarded with veneration, and large numbers desired to obtain

a personal knowledge of her. After alluding to the attendance of meetings, and to visits to the members of their own Society, she wrote, "We have inspected many prisons — In our religious services our gracious Helper has appeared very near — I have felt, at seasons, as leaving all for my Master's sake, and setting out without much of purse or scrip; but how bountifully am I provided for, internally and externally. The Great Shepherd of the sheep has been near to me in spirit, as strength in my weakness, riches in my poverty, and a present helper in the needful time."

After the completion of this journey, the result of their observations on the state of the prisons, lunatic asylums, &c., all which were in a most deplorable condition, were published in a pamphlet, entitled "Notes on a Visit to Prisons," &c. This raised an increased and general feeling of sympathy with suffering fellow-creatures immured in these receptacles of vice and misery.

Her occupations in prisons did not supersede the exercise of charity in the vicinity of her own home. Attention to the neighbouring poor, and to the school, now devolved chiefly on her two elder daughters, whom she early trained to habits of benevolence, and they proved, in many respects, her efficient helpers. New claims on her sympathies and her cares were continually presented; and no variety of human suffering, comprehended within the sphere of her mental vision, passed before her unheeded, or if within the reach of her kindly influence, without an

effort for its relief. During the rigorous winter of 1819, the sufferings of homeless wanderers in the streets of London deeply touched the heart of this christian philanthropist. One case was truly agonizing — that of a little boy, who had, in vain, begged at many houses, for the few half-pence required to procure him a night's lodging in some passage or cellar. He was, at several public houses, refused admittance unless he could furnish three pence; this he could not obtain; and, in the morning, was found dead on the step of a door! Through the exertions of Elizabeth Fry, an asylum was immediately provided. It was well warmed, nutritious soup was prepared night and morning, with a ration of bread for each one sheltered there, and straw beds were furnished. The bounty of the public afforded the requisite funds. Many hundreds were every evening admitted to the "Shelter." Employment of various kinds was supplied, and the females placed under the care of a "ladies' committee," with Elizabeth Fry at their head.

The "Notes" on prisons were the means of effecting a most important change in the views of many persons in conspicuous stations. The dukes of Sussex and Gloucester became earnest advocates for the reform of the penal code. The latter accompanied Elizabeth Fry into one of the cells at Newgate, in order to visit a poor young woman condemned to suffer death for a trifling degree of complicity in a case of forgery.

In 1821, Sir James Mackintosh brought forward

in Parliament a motion, "for mitigating the severity of punishment in certain cases of forgery and the crimes connected therewith." He was nobly supported by the late Sir T. F. Buxton, and the arguments of these two enlightened and patriotic men, based on facts and incontrovertible evidence, aroused to conviction many in that assembly; and, although a small majority against the Bill retarded, for a time, the success of the measure, the sentiment that the termination of human existence belongs to the prerogative of an *infallible* Judge, gradually became so far diffused throughout the nation, that not only for cases of forgery, but for all other crimes excepting wilful murder, the terrible penalty of death is annulled.

The deep interest, which the distresses of her fellow-creatures continually impressed on her heart, did not exclude a christian solicitude for the *spiritual* well-being of her friends; nor, in any degree, lessen the tender affection which she invariably cherished towards her endeared family connexions. Her engagements in the ministry were edifying and comforting to her fellow members, and also to other pious individuals. On returning home from a journey, she made the following striking entry in her journal: "I was carried through the service to my own surprise: I felt so remarkably low, so unworthy, so unfit, and as if I had little or nothing to communicate to them, but I was marvellously helped from meeting to meeting; strength so arose with the occasion that the fear of man was taken from me, and I was enabled to declare gospel truths boldly. This is to me wonderful;

it must be the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes — how He strengtheneth them that have no might, and helpeth those that have no power! The peace that I felt after the services, for some days, seemed to flow like a river, covering all my cares and sorrows, so that I might truly say, "There is (even here) a rest for the people of God. My sceptical, doubting mind has been convinced of the truth of religion, not by the hearing of the ear, but from what I have really handled and tasted and known for myself of the word of life — may I not say of the power of God unto salvation"?

The influence of Elizabeth Fry extended itself far beyond the sphere of her personal exertions, and, in many places, both in this and other lands, her example of devotedness, in the care of the wretched and vicious, was emulated with blessed effect. At Petersburgh, the dowager empress adopted her plans, and most humanely superintended the observance of them.

While thus animated by the evidence of a union of christian effort, her spirit was often oppressed by many sorrows. Death visited the family circle. First, her endeared sister Priscilla, a devoted follower of Jesus, was taken from the religious philanthropic service, in which she had eminently adorned the cause of Christ. Then, a keen affliction was dispensed by the decease of her brother Joseph's amiable wife. Soon after the last-mentioned event, she writes, "I feel brought low before the Lord. What can I say, and what can I do, but beseech Thee, O Lord! to care for us, present and absent; to undertake for us;

to show us the sufficiency of thy grace, and the power of thy salvation? We beseech Thee, through Him that hath loved us and given himself for us, that thou wouldst draw us all, whether now far from Thee, or near unto Thee, by the powerful cords of thy loving-kindness, out of darkness into thy marvellous light; that we may ever dwell in thy love, and know the fulness of thy power, thy glory, and thy majesty. Amen."

Early in 1824, Elizabeth Fry paid another visit of christian love to her friends. She returned home in feeble health. Shortly afterwards she entered the following lines in her journal; — "Yesterday, after a very weak and faint morning, I attended our 'Ladies' British Society' meeting: it was surprising, even to myself, to find what had been accomplished. How many prisons are now visited; and how much is done for the inhabitants of the prison-house, and what a way is made for their return from evil! It is marvellous in my eyes, that a poor instrument should have been the apparent cause of setting forward such a work." Elizabeth Fry's reduced health now required entire relaxation, and she spent more than two months at Brighton. Whilst there, she was often distressed by the multitude of beggars who importuned her, and other visitors, for pecuniary relief. She was anxious that benevolent and wealthy persons, of whom there were many in Brighton, should form an association for inspecting and relieving the necessities of the sick and indigent. After much exertion, and many discouragements, she succeeded in organiz-

ing a "District Visiting Society," which proved an instrument of much blessing.

In the course of her indisposition at Brighton, she was frequently subject to faintness, and her attendants found it needful to place her at an open window, for the refreshment of the air. On reviving from these attacks, one object always attracted her notice — the solitary "Coast Guard" man: and, as she watched his measured steps, her interest became excited; and she ascertained that the service in which he was employed, was one that entailed much privation, hardship, and danger. Her gentle spirit sympathised with him and his fellow-guardsmen, and she was anxious to promote their moral and religious improvement, by supplying them with Bibles and useful books. She applied to the committee of the "Bible Society" for a grant, which was liberally furnished; and fifty copies of the entire Sacred Volume, and twenty-five New Testaments, were promptly forwarded for her use. They were gratefully received, and there were afterwards evidences that they had been diligently and profitably read. On her return home, she wrote, "We left Brighton last sixth-day; after what I passed through, in suffering and in doing, in various ways, I may acknowledge that I have no adequate expression to convey the gratitude due to my merciful and gracious Lord. I left it, after a stay of nearly ten weeks, with a comparatively healthy body, and, above all, with a remarkably clear and easy mind, with a portion of that

overflowing peace that made all things, natural and spiritual, appear sweet."

Some weeks afterwards,—"I returned from a short expedition to Brighton last evening; a very interesting, and, I trust, not unimportant one. My object was the 'District Society' that I was enabled to form there when I was so ill. Much good appears done; a fine arrangement made. I have not time to relate our interesting history, or how a poor unworthy woman, nothing extraordinary in point of power, simply seeking to follow a crucified Lord, and to co-operate with His grace in the heart, was yet followed after by almost every rank in society, with the greatest openness for any communications of a religious nature: William Allen was there, a great helper. Some of the poor blockade men seemed much affected by the attention paid to them, as also did their officers, and I am ready to hope that a little seed is scattered there."

Shortly after her return to her own home, she felt constrained, through the influence of divine love, to undertake another and more extended mission—a visit to Ireland. In this, she was accompanied by her dear brother and helper, J. J. Gurney, and her valued sister-in-law Elizabeth Fry. A great variety of duties devolved upon them, as they travelled through that country. In the principal cities and towns, particularly in Dublin, they were not only engaged in religious services amongst their friends, but large numbers of strangers attended the meetings at which they were present; and they also inspected

prisons, asylums, bridewells, houses of industry, &c. Near the close of the arduous engagement, her health became seriously affected. Fever of a low character prostrated all her bodily energies. I was, she says, "in one of my distressing faint states — tried without — feeling such fears, lest my being thus stopped by illness should try the faith of others, and lest my own faith should fail — however, much as I suffered for a time, I had most sweet peace afterwards; my blessed Saviour arose 'with healing in his wings,' delivered me from all my fears, and granted me such a sense of having obtained full reconciliation with my God, as I can hardly describe. I no longer hankered after home, but was able to commit myself, and those dearest to me, to this unslumbering, all-merciful, and all-powerful Shepherd." She was favoured to recover sufficiently to finish her labours in Ireland satisfactorily, and return home in safety and peace. But very soon the scene was changed — a heavy cloud was gathering round her and the beloved ones of her family circle. Her sister, Rachel Gurney, endeared to her by the closest bond of sisterhood, was seriously declining in health. Elizabeth Fry passed some weeks at Brighton, tenderly nursing this dear invalid. During her stay there she had a meeting with the members of the "District Society," which, she says, "was humbling to me, as such exposures always are, more or less, and a real effort of duty, but I desired only to do it as such. Nothing of the kind appears to me to effect so much, as forming and helping these public charities, because so

many are assisted by them. I also called at one of the Blockade Service stations, and found that the libraries, which I had sent three years ago, continued to be very useful to the men and their families. Out of deep distress I formed these institutions — surely out of weakness I was made strong. I was enabled to attend to my beloved sister during the remainder of her stay at Brighton, and then brought her home here; she left us for Earlham on second day."

A few weeks later Elizabeth Fry visited Earlham, to attend the dying bed of this excellent person, whose mind was "in a most favoured state — all fear of death removed from her." In the autumn of 1828, she wrote in her journal, "Dearest Lord! increase my faith more firmly; more fixedly establish me upon the Rock of Ages; that however the winds blow, the rains descend, or the floods beat against me, I may not be greatly moved: and let not any of the hindering or polluting things of this world lessen my love to Thee, and to Thy cause; or prevent my following hard after Thee in spirit, with a humble, faithful, watchful, circumspect, and devoted heart."

But a short time elapsed after the last entry, ere (in consequence of the failure of one of the houses of business with which her husband was connected) the storm of worldly distress and perplexity was permitted to assail her, and severely to test the stability of her spiritual building. But it was, according to her fervent petition, firmly established on the Rock of Ages, Christ Jesus; and, though deeply conflicted in spirit, and suffering much from impaired bodily

vigour, she was not overwhelmed. She besought her Heavenly Father for "grace sufficient in this most awful time;" and truly His merciful ear was open to her prayer, and He enabled her, through the abundant out-pouring of His Holy Spirit, to glorify Him in the midst of the furnace of adversity, and to testify, from heartfelt and deeply-proved experience, that "the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He. knoweth them that trust in him." She passed much of this season of sorrow in retirement and meditation, and derived great consolation from the records of Divine Inspiration; and having often witnessed the blessed influence which the sacred truths of Holy Scripture had produced on the minds of her fellow-probationers in varied ranks of life, she was induced to select from its pages a portion for every day in the year. This little "Text Book" has been widely circulated, not only in this country, but also in many parts of the continent of Europe; and it continues to be a cherished and an instructive memento of this devout servant of Christ.

Notwithstanding that many circumstances threatened to obstruct the prosecution of her important christian labours; and for a time they were much restricted; some objects of special interest, which she had for a considerable time believed it to be her duty to accomplish, were still frequently presented to her mind, as a portion of that work in the vineyard of her Lord, which He had called her to perform. When natural feeling was disposed to shrink from further public engagements, she sought to commit

her way unto Him: and she says, in a letter to an absent daughter, "I have found such help and strength in prayer to God . . . . I think I have frequently, if not generally, come to be able to say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Under date Eighth month, 29th, 1829, we find the following striking entry, "Our wedding-day! twenty-nine years since we married. My texts for the morning are applicable, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' As far as we can judge from external appearances, mine has not been a common life. He who seeth in secret, only knows the unutterable depths and sorrows I have had to pass through, as well as, at other times, I may almost say, joys inexpressible and full of glory."

The sympathy of her friends, of every class and denomination, had been powerfully excited, and she received, through various channels, the evidences of their high esteem, and also of their deep unity with her christian efforts for the amelioration of human suffering, and the promotion of true religion in the souls of men: and many, who could correctly estimate the value of her services, strongly encouraged her to resume them. Her brothers were so fully impressed with the importance of sustaining her efforts for the welfare of her fellow-mortals, that, with a liberal hand, they supplied the resources which, during the remainder of her life, were requisite for the prosecu-

tion of her philanthropic labours, and for her subsequent travels in foreign parts.

About this time, accompanied by William Allen, she visited the duchess of Kent and the young princess Victoria; and she writes, "We were received with much kindness and cordiality; and I felt my way open to express, not only my desire that the best blessing might rest upon them, but that the young princess might follow the example of our blessed Lord; that, as she grew in stature, she might grow in favour with God and man. I also ventured to remind her of king Josiah, who began to reign at eight years of age, and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, turning neither to the right hand, nor to the left: which seemed to be well received." An invitation was sent to Elizabeth Fry by the duchess of Gloucester; and, in reference to some religious communication with the duke and duchess, she says, "May good result to them, and no harm to myself; but I feel these openings a weighty responsibility, and desire to be faithful, not forward." In 1833 we find her, first in Jersey, visiting, in christian love, the few Friends there; endeavouring to remedy the evils of the prison, the hospital, the workhouse, and lunatic asylum; and then in Guernsey, establishing "The St. Peter's Port Provident and District Society:" which, at the present time, is spoken of as having proved "a real blessing to the poor of the community."

In the metropolis the labours of Elizabeth Fry could be safely remitted — all the prisons being placed under the care of efficient committees of the

"Ladies' British Society:" and the impulse of heavenly love drew her into other fields of service for the welfare of her fellow-beings. Visiting the Isle of Wight, she was much interested in the condition of the Coast-Guardsmen. Interviews with them stimulated her to undertake that great work of providing libraries for *all* the Coast Guard Stations in Great Britain. Such an engagement presented great difficulties, and, to an ordinary mind, they would have appeared insurmountable; but it was a remarkable feature in the character of this gifted woman, that when an object of duty was clearly presented to her mind, no discouragement deterred her from pursuing it: she laboured on with a quiet, patient perseverance, until she saw it accomplished. Referring to the plan which she had projected, she afterwards says, "I have been very busy, trying to obtain libraries for all the Coast Guard Stations, and have had to see men in authority, who received me in a way that was surprising to myself." The government sanctioned and assisted her efforts, and, eventually, upwards of 52,400 volumes were provided for 600 libraries. But all this was not effected without much toil, a great deal of writing, many wearisome journeys to London, and the exercise of a rare degree of sound wisdom and discretion in the selection of the books suited to the purpose designed. Thus this vast undertaking, which, she says, she had "long had at heart," was accomplished to her great satisfaction; and she records her emotions as follows: "My desire is, to do all these things with a single eye to the glory of God

and the welfare of my fellow-mortals, and, if they succeed, to pray that He, who alone can bless and increase, may prosper the work of my unworthy hands; and that I may ever wholly give the glory to Him to whom it is due." Before the close of 1835, she successfully made the further effort of supplying government and other packets, with libraries, containing a good supply of Bibles, Testaments, &c.; she also established one at Amesbury, for the use of the Shepherds of Salisbury Plain. She afterwards received a great number of letters, all expressing gratitude and pleasure, from the Guardsmen and their Officers; and she had, as she remarks, "many proofs of the use and value of the libraries sent to them, proving it not to have been labour in vain in the Lord."

Elizabeth Fry again visited the Channel Islands during the summer of 1836. A variety of important engagements awaited her whilst on this excursion. Both then, and on many subsequent occasions, she was employed in forming District Societies, as well as organizing committees for the care of prisons, hospitals, and houses of correction.

In the First month, 1838, with the cordial approval of her friends, and furnished by the meetings, with which she was in connexion, with credentials testifying their full unity with her proposed services, Elizabeth Fry commenced a series of visits to various nations of the European continent. In the first, she was accompanied by her husband and their valued friend Josiah Forster. The formalities of introduction

were little needed to bring her into association with a great variety of serious persons, who knew that the objects which induced her to undertake these journeys were widely different from those that usually attract visitors to foreign lands. She went not in the pursuit of health, worldly gain, or self-gratification; but, in obedience to an impulse which she certainly believed to be divine, she sought to follow the voice that called her, and the guidance of an unerring hand. It led her to explore the abodes of sorrow, of suffering, and of vice, where, with a wonderful degree of skill and energy, she suggested plans of amelioration and reform; and, assisted by excellent individuals, whose hearts were influenced by a measure of that love and zeal which animated her own spirit, her efforts were remarkably crowned with success. But it was not only in the interests of suffering humanity that she was welcomed, as a sister beloved in the Lord, — wherever she went, her company was desired, and her pious exhortations and her devout prayers made a deep impression on persons of every rank. Those who, from their exalted position, are rarely accessible to such as occupy a private station in life, sought for interviews with this messenger of truth. Sovereign princes and royal nobles received, with seriousness and affectionate respect, the admonitory sentiment, or the word that stimulated to the performance of duty; whilst the accents of sympathy and the language of encouragement conveyed a soothing balm to the sorrowing hearts of some, who, whilst surrounded by earthly splendour, were no strangers to

the vicissitudes and afflictions that attend our mortal being. The distinction between their external circumstances and those of this devoted christian philanthropist, was no barrier against the emotions of friendship and high esteem. Many had heard, and some had witnessed, that she was endowed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, with gifts of priceless value, compared with which, all worldly grandeur sinks into insignificance: and there were, amongst the varied classes of the people, some who were prepared to participate with her in the overflowing of that stream of heavenly love which, springing from the abounding grace of God, ennobles its possessor with the riches of faith — the heirship of a kingdom infinite in glory, and eternal in duration.

In Paris, which was the chief scene of her first benevolent exertions on the continent, she and her companions inspected prisons, hospitals, schools, &c. Many other important objects claimed their attention. There were, in that city, kindred hearts, who rendered efficient assistance to the visitors; and some excellent ladies, devoted to the cause of the Redeemer, whose light shone brightly amidst much surrounding darkness, became united to Elizabeth Fry in the bonds of cordial affection and true gospel fellowship. She addressed most solemn and impressive exhortations to poor prisoners on the circumstances of the "prodigal son," a French lady having read the parable. Afterwards she visited the king (Louis Philippe), his queen, and the princess Adelaide, &c.; strongly expressing to the queen, a desire for a more extended

reading of the Scriptures and better observance of the Sabbath. Then she proceeded to the residence of the youthful duchess of Orleans, the bereaved widow of the heir apparent to the throne of France: "there," says Elizabeth Fry, "we had a delightful visit — the sweetest religious communication with her; and other interesting conversation." The fatigue to which Elizabeth Fry was subjected was often very great, but she records the thankful acknowledgment, "He who I believe put me forth, has, from season to season, restored my soul and body, and helped me from hour to hour. I have exceedingly and deeply felt my utter unworthiness, and that all is from the fullness and freeness of unmerited mercy and love, in Christ Jesus."

Shortly after their return to London, the following entry occurs in the journal: — "Yesterday was the largest British Society meeting I ever remember; partly collected to hear my account of our French journey. There must have been some hundreds present; many of them ladies of rank. My prayers have arisen that, however imperfectly or unworthily sown, the seed scattered yesterday may be so prospered by the Lord's power, life, and grace, that it may bear a full crop to his praise." In the Eighth month following, Elizabeth Fry, with the approval of her friends, again visited the meetings of her own religious Society in Scotland, having also many opportunities of declaring the blessed truths of the Gospel of Christ, to large congregations of varied classes of christian professors. She also effected

some very important improvements in the care of several prisons, finding others "in excellent order," — the happy consequence of her previous regulations.

Early in the succeeding year (1839), we find her again at Paris, with her husband, her eldest daughter, and their former kind companion Josiah Forster. Much important service awaited her, both in that city and many other places in France, also in the principal towns of Switzerland. At the commencement of this engagement she wrote as follows: "How earnestly do I desire and pray that my Lord would clearly point out my work, and enable me, by His power and Spirit, to perform it to His praise, the good of others, and my own peace! Lord, regard thy servant in her low estate; and, if it be thy holy will, give some token, by Thy presence, Spirit, and power, that Thou art with us, and more abundantly fit and prepare for thine own work. I beseech Thee to give Thy poor servant a quiet, patient, trustful mind; only dependent upon the fresh puttings forth of thy Spirit, and the incomings of thy love. Amen."

Her gospel ministrations, throughout this extensive journey, were described as being of a powerfully impressive and instructive character. She visited many persons who filled conspicuous and important stations in life, to whom her influence was evidently blessed. She also addressed the wretched inmates of the prisons in the awakening strains of gospel invitation. Whilst in Paris, a large company passed an evening with her and her companions; more than a hundred persons, consisting of different classes,

Catholics and Protestants, also some of the Greek Church. In this remarkable assemblage were Greeks, Ionians, Spaniards, a Pole, Italians, Germans, English, Americans, and French; and Elizabeth Fry, in writing some account of the opportunity, says, "There was a sweet feeling of the love of God over us. We finished by reading, in a solemn manner, the 15th of Luke: I made a little comment — there was very great solemnity."

Of another occasion she writes, "Our great *philanthropic* evening was largely attended. I strongly impressed the extreme importance of the influence of the higher on the lower classes of society, by their example and precept; mentioned late hours, theatres, and other evils. Then advised giving the poor christian education, Lending Libraries, District Societies, and other objects. We finished with a very solemn Scripture reading, 3rd chapter of Colossians, and the 20th and 21st verses of the last chapter of Hebrews. I expressed some solemn parting truths, and our party broke up in much love and peace." Services of a similar character fell to her lot in many places during their travels, and amongst the interests of the present mission, few afforded more satisfaction than a visit to their fellow-professors, the Friends of Congenies and its vicinity. In reference to it Elizabeth Fry wrote, "I humbly trust that the blessing of the Lord was with us; I have seldom felt more peace than when engaged in these labours of christian love at Congenies, or more clear belief that I was in my right place."

After their return home, some religious engagements, of a very important nature, claimed her attention, both amongst the members of her own christian community, and in a more extended sphere. In company with her brother, Samuel Gurney, and their friend William Allen, she by appointment, visited our youthful queen, and expressed words of encouragement in the pursuit of virtue, and of "desire that the blessing of God might rest upon the queen and her consort." Her two companions in this interview became, a few weeks later, united with her in another journey on the continent. The travellers proceeded to Belgium, having much weighty service, particularly in Brussels. They had an interesting conversation with the king, introducing various subjects of great importance, to which he gave the kindest attention. Elizabeth Fry pleaded, successfully, with the amiable queen of Hanover for a remission of the sufferings of prisoners, and enforced the importance of circulating the Holy Scriptures, &c. In Prussia, her benevolent and christian efforts were cordially encouraged by several members of the reigning family, particularly by the king's sister, an eminently pious and devoted lady. The crown prince also received the visitors with much kindness. Whilst in Berlin, an excellent address was presented to the king, containing a respectful but earnest remonstrance, on behalf of a body of Lutheran professors, who, through *conscientiously* dissenting from the national church, were subjected to imprisonment, &c. It was well received, the king saying he thought "the Spirit of

God must have helped them to express themselves as they had done." At Minden and Pyrmont, the travellers spent some days in sweet christian communion with a number of valuable persons, members of the Society of Friends, to whom their visit was edifying and comforting. They returned home in much peace.

In the retrospect of the journey, Elizabeth Fry's mind dwelt on an excellent establishment which she had witnessed at Kaisersworth, near Düsseldorf, at which serious-minded young women were trained to fill the responsible situation of nurses to the sick. She saw the great advantage that would result from a similar institution in her own land; and, with her wonted energy and wisdom, she organized a Committee which commenced the undertaking. The institution has steadily advanced and prospered; the aid of the "Nursing Sisters" having been sought and greatly prized, by persons of every rank, not excepting members of the royal family.

One more lengthened journey on the Continent, appeared to the mind of this devoted gospel messenger, to be called for by her Divine Master. She felt strongly attracted by the constraining love of Christ, to visit those who desired to serve His holy cause of righteousness and mercy, in the kingdoms of Holland, Denmark, Prussia, and other German States. Her beloved brother, Joseph John Gurney, united with her in this gospel mission. They landed at Rotterdam, where they had a large meeting for worship; and visited prisons there and at Gouda, having much

satisfaction in these engagements. On arriving at the Hague, they received an early invitation to visit the king, queen, and princess Sophia. With these very interesting persons they had a remarkable interview. Elizabeth Fry says, "We all felt very weightily our serious engagement. The king began easy and pleasant conversation with me about my visiting prisons. I told him, in a short lively manner, the history of it. He appeared much interested, as did the queen. I then said, my brother had visited the West Indies, and would be glad to tell the king and queen the result of his observations in those islands. This he did capitally; he represented also the sad effects of the Dutch enlisting soldiers on the Gold Coast (in Africa), and how it led to evil and slavery; which so touched the king, that he said he meant to put a stop to it. I then most seriously laid before the king, the sad defect of having no religious education in their government schools, and the Bible not introduced. I expressed my desire that the blessing of the Almighty might rest on the king, queen, their children, and their children's children. The king then took me by the hand, and said, he hoped God would bless me. We gave them books, which they accepted kindly." The travellers visited also several other members of this royal family — all excellent persons — with whom they had very important communication on many points. They then proceeded to Amsterdam and Bremen; at the latter place they had a large public meeting for worship Long before the appointed hour, well-

dressed persons entered the noble building to secure places. Several pasteurs were present; one of them at the close, addressed *the missionary brother and sister,* expressing his desire that what had been uttered might be blessed to the people, and that they might be themselves blessed. To Elizabeth Fry he said, "your name has long been to us a word of beauty." A christian gentleman, in a note, to her and her brother, remarked, "Now, I am more than convinced that *you are sent to us by the Lord*, to become a great blessing, and a salt to our city." After similar services at Hamburg, they crossed the Baltic to Copenhagen, and on the morning after their arrival, the queen of Denmark came from her country palace, ten miles distant, to welcome the visitors, and to take Elizabeth Fry in her carriage to her infant school. "It was," says Elizabeth Fry, "really beautiful to see her surrounded by the little children, and to hear her translating what I wished to say to them." In the evening they drove out to the palace, and were invited by the king and queen to dine there a few days later, when the inspection of the prisons, &c., might be completed. This was, Elizabeth Fry says, "a very serious occasion; as we had so much to lay before the king — slavery in the West Indies — the condition of the prisons, &c. I was, in spirit, so weighed down with the importance of the occasion, that I could hardly enjoy the beautiful scene. The queen met us with the utmost kindness and condescension, and took us a walk in their lovely grounds. The king also met us very courteously." After

dinner "the king and queen took us to the drawing room window to see a large school of orphans, protégés of the queen." These children had been brought from the city in twenty-five carts, to enjoy a holiday, and, as the queen said, "*to meet Madame Fry.*" How interesting was this arrangement of the excellent queen; so calculated to fix, in the remembrance of the infantile group, the person and character of this eminent christian philanthropist, and to sow, in their youthful bosoms, a seed of benevolence and virtue, that might in due season produce a fruit, partaking of the nature of that influence from which it originated. A shower of rain coming, the king and queen had all the orphans collected around them in the saloon; this afforded an opportunity for a religious communication from Elizabeth Fry, which was interpreted by a German prince, who was so impressed by the sweetness and power of her ministry, that, in the midst of his interpretation, he exclaimed, "C'est un don de Dieu!" (It is a gift from God!)

A few days subsequent to this remarkable occasion, the travellers paid another visit to the king and queen at their country palace, and had much interesting communication with them. Elizabeth Fry read a portion of Scripture, and expressed her "religious concern and desires" for the best welfare of the royal pair, whose kindness, she says, was *very* great. Before quitting Copenhagen she had "a most delightful farewell religious" opportunity "with the queen and princess." She also paid a very interesting visit to

the dowager-queen, and another to the prince and princess of Hesse Cassel.

In reviewing their engagements, she says, "I believe we were sent to Copenhagen for a purpose. May our unworthy labours be blessed to the liberation of many captives, spiritually and temporally." Returning to Hamburg, they proceeded to Pyrmont and Minden, where they were refreshed and comforted by meetings with their own religious community; also by a very satisfactory one at Bückeberg, where many of the higher rank, with the reigning prince and princesses of a German State, were assembled. Thence they went forward to Hanover, visiting, on their route, the great prison at Hameln, where the chains, that had heavily fettered a vast number of poor prisoners, had been removed, in consequence of the intercession of the late excellent queen of Hanover, who was stimulated to this merciful intervention by the representations of Elizabeth Fry. In Prussia and Silesia, they had much religious intercourse with a large circle of truly christian princes and nobles, and were welcomed by the king and queen with the most kind and cordial friendship, and in a large assemblage of persons of the poorer class were mingled twelve of the royal family, with other princes and princesses and nobles, all listening with devout attention to the solemn and impressive ministrations of their visitors. One, who was present, says of Elizabeth Fry's address, that "with her usual clearness and power, each individual, each class present, seemed included. Never did she address any assembly more

beautifully, with more unction, or more truly from the depths of her heart; and no audience could have given more profound attention to every word she uttered; From Berlin she returned home; suffering much from fatigue; and her health became now seriously enfeebled, but she received the dispensation with a meek and patient spirit. "What a mercy," she says, "it is, that I have so many hours of rest, ease, and peace! I feel only an unworthy monument of the love, pity, mercy, and faithfulness of our Lord, to one of His most undeserving servants."

At the commencement of the following year, 1842, her wonted vigour continued to decline, but the fervency of her zeal to procure relief to suffering fellow-creatures was undiminished; and, on a public occasion, she availed herself of an opportunity to plead with some of the rulers of her own nation, for several important measures of amelioration and reform. The king of Prussia visited the English court shortly after; and, by his particular request, Elizabeth Fry met him at the Mansion House, and had with him, "much deeply interesting conversation on various important subjects of mutual interest." The king arranged to meet Elizabeth Fry at the Newgate prison. It was a memorable occasion. The female prisoners were seated on each side of a lengthened row of tables — they were neatly clad, their conduct and manner orderly and respectful; and although surrounded by much that was calculated to excite their curiosity and to attract their gaze, not one was observed to look around at the strangers present

The king led Elizabeth Fry to a chair at the head of the table, and sat beside her. A considerable number of persons were ranged around the large room — some noblemen, English and Foreign; city authorities, in their scarlet robes of office; many ladies, including members of the prison committee, &c. Yet, notwithstanding that the assembled company was of so unusual a character, it did not distract the attention of the poor prisoners: they appeared to listen with seriousness to the chapter and psalm which were read by Elizabeth Fry, and to an impressive address and prayer which she offered at the conclusion. How wonderful was the contrast between the solemnity and the deep stillness that pervaded the apartment, and the riotous and savage turbulence which formerly reigned there!

On the 8th of the following Fifth month, Elizabeth Fry entered in her journal, "On third-day the lady mayoress and I paid interesting and satisfactory visits to the queen-dowager, the duchess of Kent, and the duchess of Gloucester. I went with my heart lifted up for help, and strength, and direction, that the visits might prove useful, and that I might drop the word in season; and that I might myself be kept humble, watchful, and faithful to my Lord. With the queen-dowager, and her sister, the duchess of Saxe Weimar, &c., we had a very satisfactory time, much lively and edifying conversation. With the duchess of Kent, had interesting conversation about our dear young queen, prince Albert, and their little ones. I desired, wherever I could, to throw in a hint

of a spiritual kind, and was enabled to do it. I gave the duchess some papers; with a note to prince Albert, requesting him to lay the suffering state of the Waldenses, from their fresh persecutions, before the queen." A few months later, we find Elizabeth Fry receiving a letter from Kamehameha III, king of the Sandwich Islands; for *he*, too, had heard of the universality of her christian interest in the welfare of mankind. His people were, through the avarice of Europeans, largely supplied with ardent spirits, which caused sickness, want, and crime, to prevail amongst them. He besought the kind intervention of this philanthropist, that the importation of these deleterious beverages might be prevented. Elizabeth Fry pleaded the cause of these islanders, with the first minister of state in a neighbouring country.—Thus, from the appeal of suffering, or the plaint of wo, she could not turn away her ear; but, from whatever portion of the habitable globe it might arise, the heaven-inspired compassion which actuated her, impelled her to seek a remedy for the evil.

But whilst, with unremitting energy, she sought to pour a healing balm into the wounds of sin and sorrow, which so largely pervade the ranks of human society, this devoted servant of God was permitted to partake, in no small degree, of the afflictions incident to this probationary state. Her health so evidently declined, as to induce her family to promote her residence for some months at Cromer, where she might obtain both rest and invigorating air. She reluctantly quitted, for a time, her sphere of active exertion; bu

she writes, "I have sought to have my steppings directed by Him who knows what is best for us" — and, after alluding to her failing strength, she adds, "not that I fear for the everlasting state, although this confidence arises from no trust in anything in myself, but faith in the mercy of God in Christ, who tasted death for every man, and a full belief that, unworthy as I am, through His mercy He will not cast me out of His presence, (which I delight in,) nor shut up His tender mercies from me."

In her retirement at Cromer, however, she followed the impulse of duty, by undertaking to establish a library and reading-room for the fishermen; also a "Friendly Society" for their temporal aid; being, as she says, encouraged in wakeful hours of the night, by these words, "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. In weakness and in strength we must, as ability is granted, abound in the work of the Lord. May our labour not be in vain in Him."

Some portions of her correspondence with an individual, who, when altogether unacquainted with our Religious Society, had been brought under much exercise of mind through her ministry, may prove instructive to the reader; especially to such as may be compared to babes in Christ. On receiving a letter from the stranger alluded to, she writes, "I find, my dear friend, that thou art one of those whose heart has been touched with a Saviour's love. Mayst thou have grace *to 'follow on* to know the Lord,' that thy soul may eventually 'be filled with the unsearchable

riches of Christ;'" Soon afterwards, she addressed the same person as follows, "I see, my dear friend, the need of deep watchfulness, and much quietness of spirit, that thou mayst discern the voice of the True Shepherd, *that still small voice*, (which is very gentle in its leadings,) from the voice of the stranger, who would imitate this true voice, and deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. I long for thy preservation and growth in the truth, and, as in *quietness, humility*, and *faithfulness*, thou followest and servest the Lord Jesus, I believe thou wilt be blessed, and made a blessing to many."

Not long after this, she again wrote, "I feel much interest on thy behalf, and truly desire that the Lord may defend thee with his armour, on the right hand and on the left; keep thee by his own power, in the meekness of wisdom, and guide thy steps safely. As thou art concerned 'patiently to wait, and quietly to hope, for the salvation of God,' I fully believe thy way will be made plain before thee, and all liberty granted to thee that thou canst desire." A few weeks later, she addressed the following to the same individual:—"I feel hopeful about thee, my dear friend, and believe, as the Lord himself is thy Governor, and the Holy Spirit thy Sanctifier, all will be well with thee; and all, in the end, will be at peace with thee: but thou must be very patient, very quiet, very watchful, and very humble; and the Lord himself will be with thee and bless thee, and make a way for thee where thou canst see no way." The following very instructive letter, written subsequen

to the last extract, and when this object of her deep Christian solicitude had been admitted into membership with our religious society, may suitably be subjoined.

"My dear young Friend,

I believe thou hast been visited of the Lord, and dealt very gently with by him, and that much is due from thee to him; but my belief is that, in a very especial manner, he calls thee to prove thy gratitude and love to him who has done so much for thee, by a very watchful, humble, and circumspect walk before him, and before his servants; and particularly by being adorned with the meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price in His sight. As thou fully experiencest thy own spirit to be thus subjected, I believe he will make use of thee with others; but we must be well instructed in the school of Christ ourselves, before we can do much in teaching others; and if we are really taught in this school, self must be of no reputation in our own eyes; but in humility and devotion of heart, we must dwell as at the foot of the cross; and as we there receive instruction, be willing to communicate it to others, when called for at our hands. I have for weeks past had it on my mind to advise thee, also, to be on thy guard against any undue dependence on man, for I have seen Satan often very busy in this way. He would often try to make even sweet spiritual unity degenerate into a false dependence on each other. I therefore warn my

friends on this point; receive the word of caution from one who loves thee.

I should like a few lines of love from thee. Give my dear love to ———, who is dear to me (may I not say) in the Lord. I know I am unworthy of this sweet fellowship, but am in mercy permitted to feel it: and also toward thee, dear young friend.

My desires are strong for thy growth, and real preservation in 'the truth, as it is in Jesus.'

I am thy affectionately interested friend,

ELIZABETH FRY."

About fifteen months later, the deeply interesting extract which follows, was penned to the same young friend. It is inserted on account of its being a faithful and most instructive transcript of her own feelings, as well as of her concern on behalf of the individual to whom it was addressed.

"I think thou art, as far as I am concerned, like a weaned child, not longer needing my help as a nurse or mother; for, dear friend, thou art graciously and wonderfully cared for by the Shepherd of Israel, who has, through his own unmerited mercy, supplied thy need, and led thee very gently along; and if he should see meet, after cleansing thee by his blood, to decorate thee with his ornaments, even then thou must keep at the feet of him who has done so much for thee, and in watchfulness and instant prayer, cleave close to him in spirit. The experience of my life leads me to an awful fear of self ever being exalted, and therefore, for myself or others, there is

nothing hardly that I desire so much, as that, however our Lord may grant us any of his gifts or graces, however He may anoint our lips to speak well of his name, we may be kept humble before him, and meek and lowly in heart, following his most holy and blessed example."

As the spring returned, she felt strongly attracted to pay, once more, a short visit to some dear christian friends at Paris, who were her helpers in those works of mercy which had already occupied her attention in that city; and in the fourth month she went thither, in company with her brother Joseph John Gurney and his wife. Her heart was gladdened by a renewal of association with devoted servants of the Lord Jesus, who, amidst the dissipation and irreligion of a great metropolis, were as "the salt of the earth," and who, she says, "have been greatly prospered in their work of christian love, in which they have persevered ever since my first visit to Paris." She again, by appointment, visited the king, queen, and princess Adelaide; and had a long and deeply interesting interview with the duchess of Orleans and her step-mother the grand-duchess of Mecklenburgh; on which occasion the intercourse was of a most instructive character. She returned home, with a peaceful and encouraged spirit—attended some of the sittings of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, and afterwards the annual convention of the "British Ladies' Society."

As the summer advanced, her health appeared to be fast declining. The autumn was passed at Sand-

gate and Tonbridge Wells; but these changes failed to invigorate her enfeebled frame; and, during the ensuing winter, her physical suffering was intense; but whilst enduring agonizing pain, she said that the everlasting arms were underneath — that the undercurrent was peaceful, notwithstanding that the surface was so greatly tempest-tossed; and, in her journal, she entered the prayer, "Most gracious Lord! may it please Thee to grant me grace, minute by minute, to hold fast my confidence steadfast unto the end; that, continuing faithful unto death, I may, through Thy merits, receive a crown of life." On the return of spring in the following year, 1844, there was some perceptible improvement in her health. Her justly-valued brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Fowel Buxton, whose bodily state had become greatly reduced by lengthened illness, was removed to Bath, for the benefit of the waters and the warmer air. Elizabeth Fry had a strong desire that the same means of restoration might be rendered available to herself, and also that she might be located, for a time, in the vicinity of her much-loved sister Buxton. With no small difficulty her removal to Bath was accomplished. Her stay there was a source of mutual solace to each of the afflicted party, and she returned home, early in the summer, with a considerable accession of strength. But He, "whose ways are not as our ways," saw meet, in His inscrutable wisdom, to prove her faith by yet deeper trials; removing from her family circle several of its most cherished members — permitting the scythe of death

to cut down the aged, those also of infantile years and of youthful promise, together with some in the vigour of life.

In the seventh month, her endeared sister-in-law Elizabeth Fry, for many years her companion and fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, finished her earthly course in peace and joy. A darling grandson was consigned to the grave; and, during the succeeding month, her son William — the stay and succour of his suffering and sorrowing mother — with two of his lovely daughters, were, within a few days of each other, numbered with the inhabitants of the invisible world.

Recounting the distressful events that marked this awful dispensation, Elizabeth Fry wrote, "O, dear Lord! keep Thy unworthy and poor, sick servant, in this time of unutterable trial — bless and sanctify to us all, this affliction, and cause it to work for our everlasting good: and be very near to the poor, dear widow and fatherless; and may we all be drawn nearer to Thee, and Thy kingdom of rest and peace."

Her last written communication to the committee of the "British Ladies' Society" was a touching, and truly christian salutation; concluding, "May the Holy Spirit of God direct your steps, strengthen your hearts, and enable you and me to glorify our Holy Head, in doing and suffering, even unto the end; and when the end comes, through a Saviour's love and merits, may we be received into glory and everlasting peace."

One month more brought additional bereavements

—a lovely niece, with her infant son, were taken from the stripped and mourning circle; then a few weeks later, her beloved brother Buxton closed his honourable earthly course. When daily anticipating the announcement of the solemn event, she wrote to his eldest daughter, "May our afflictions be sanctified to us; not leading us to the world for consolation, but more fully to cast ourselves on Him who died for us, and hath loved us with an everlasting love."

Elizabeth Fry felt a strong desire once more to visit the home of her youth, and to partake of the solace that tenderly endeared family affection supplies to the sorrowing heart. The journey to Earlham was undertaken early in the spring of 1845: she spent many weeks there and at Northrepps; association with her beloved connexions, and the sympathy with her widowed sister Buxton, (deeply impressed as it was by the communion of affliction) was a source of mutual consolation to their stricken, but submissive spirits. Elizabeth Fry now frequently attended the meetings of Friends in Norwich, ministering with remarkable power and life, to those who were assembled there.

On her return home she was twice present at the Yearly Meeting of her own religious Society in London. On both occasions she addressed the large congregation with much solemnity and appropriateness; and at the close of her last communication, she offered, in sublime, impressive language, a fervent prayer and ascription of praise to Him whom she had long loved and served.

A few days afterwards she met her faithful friends and fellow-labourers of the "British Ladies' Society," on the occasion of their Annual Meeting, which, to accommodate her, was held at Plaistow. Her great feebleness affected them with sorrow, but they were tenderly interested in once more communing with this revered and beloved servant of God.

As the summer advanced, her family were anxious that she should partake of the invigorating influence of sea air, and a suitable house at Ramsgate was prepared for her. On being settled there, she wrote —"It still pleases my Heavenly Father that afflictions should abound to me in this tabernacle. Lord! through the fulness of thy love and pity and unmerited mercy, be pleased to arise for my help; bind up my broken heart, heal my wounded spirit, and yet enable thy servant, through the power of thy own Spirit, in everything to return thee thanks; and not to faint in the day of trouble; but, in humility and godly fear, to show forth Thy praise." About two weeks later, she penned some lines to her brother, Samuel Gurney, in which, after saying that, to the gracious care of her Lord she committed body, soul, and spirit, she added, "I have the humble trust that He will be my keeper, even unto the end; and when the end comes, through the fulness of His love and the abundance of His merits, I shall join those who, after having passed through great tribulation, are for ever at rest in Jesus, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Her physical powers continued to decline; yet that flame

of heavenly love, which had so long glowed within her bosom, could not be extinguished by suffering or by sorrow; and she employed her little remaining strength in circulating, amongst the seamen at Ramsgate, copies of the Holy Scriptures, and, amongst the poor and the labourers whom she saw in her rides, some tracts to stimulate them to love and fear their Creator.

For several successive weeks, she attended the small meeting for worship of Friends at Drapers', four miles from Ramsgate. Her engagements in the ministry of the gospel are described as having been, on these occasions, very solemn and instructive On the first day preceding that on which she died, her communication was remarked as being most impressively striking to all present. She afterwards repeatedly alluded to the opportunity, as having been one in which the Divine Presence had been signally vouchsafed. She said, "We have had a very *remarkable* meeting — such a *peculiarly* solemn time." She had then, *unconsciously*, finished her public labours; and, in the private circle, the entire absence of choice or will, in connection with *temporal* things, indicated her near approach to those of *eternal* duration. On the day which preceded the final seizure, she was employed in transcribing, at the request of a friend, who desired her autograph, some texts from the New Testament. She chose passages which declare the universality of the love of God through Jesus Christ. What theme could more befit the last reflection of those rays of light, by which, from her youthful days,

the "Sun of Righteousness" had illumined her soul? She had *experimentally* known the guiding and sustaining influence of this redeeming love: she had witnessed its power to soften the obdurate heart, to attract the worldling, and to reclaim the prodigal: and now, as she was treading the final step that intervened between the sanctified spirit and the region of light and joy, she left her dying testimony to the blessedness of this fathomless love. The selections were accompanied by this short note — the last effort of her pen — "I have copied for thee these valuable texts, that prove salvation is open to all (through a Saviour's love and merits) who believe in Him; who no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again."

In the evening of the following day, the 11th of tenth month, she became suddenly affected with some paralytic symptoms. She said to her attendant, "Oh! Mary, dear Mary, I am very ill!" After an affectionate response from the faithful nurse, the dear sufferer added, "Pray for me! — It is a strift — *but I am safe.*" This was, indeed, the fearful "*strift*" of nature — the disruption of the mortal fabric — but its celestial tenant was, for ever, "*safe.*" A few hours afterwards, in a slow, distinct voice, the *last utterance* was heard, "Oh! my dear Lord, *help* and *keep* thy servant!" and early on the succeeding morning, the 13th of tenth month 1845, her immortal spirit, *kept* by infinite power and love, winged its flight, as we may assuredly believe, to its mansion of glory in the Heavenly Father's house.

Such was the close of a life eminently dedicated to the service of God. To follow the example which it sets before us must involve many a sacrifice of vain inclination and selfish desire: but how infinitely blessed is this course of christian devotedness! How does the radiance of "the peace of God" shine on the strait and narrow path, which Jesus assures us leads to life! And when the fleeting and uncertain period of earthly probation terminates, how is it recompensed by "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

THE END.

A brief memoir of
Elizabeth Fry

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